AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 1996

cash box international magazine

The Independent Magazine for the Family Entertainment & Amusement Machine Industries

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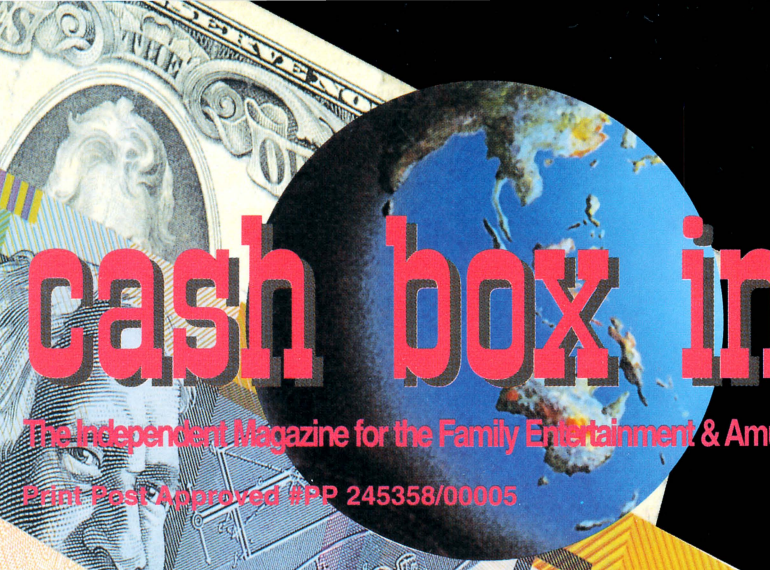
and

Family Fun Int'l



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cash box international
Magazine

Inside this month.....

KIDSTUFF '96

The first of two features this month, Kidstuff '96 covers the lucrative area of the smaller kids with articles on Kiddie Rides, Soft play and Kiddie games

See page.....34

- **CBI NEWS MAP** — A new monthly news feature — 2
- **TRADE SHOW DIARY** — Where and when with all the major shows — 4
- **WORLD NEWS** — Our full coverage of the news that matters — 5
- **EDITORIAL** — Tellin' it like it is — 8
- **WORLD GAME CHARTS** — Our world wide popularity charts — 12
- **ON THE WAY UP** — A brief look at the slight improvement in the industry that could be signalling an upturn — 29
- **DINE WITH THE BENGAL TIGERS** — An invitation from the AMOA of Queensland — 30
- **KIDSTUFF '96** — Feature on the little guys — 36
- **STREET REDEMPTION** — What's happening in street redemption — 48
- **DINE WITH THE BENGAL TIGERS** — An invitation from the AMO of Queensland — 36
- **SYDNEY GOES HI TECH** — 66
- **Family Fun International** — Our Family Fun segment covering Parks, FEC's etc — 52
- **PARK, FEC,LBE NEWS** — 53
- **FUN EXPO '96** — Great Seminar programme — 56
- **THE YEAR OF THE ROLLER COASTER** — The second of this months features on some great Roller Coasters and manufacturers — 76
- **NEW PRODUCT SECTION** — 66
- **SPANISH GAME TRANSLATIONS** — 73
- **CASH BOX PINK PAGES** — The market place for astute buyers — 76
- **TIL NEXT MONTH** — 80

LATE NEWS

PREMIER WILL BE MISSED BY MANY

The closure of Premier Technology, maker of Gottlieb Pinballs, is considered by most as the biggest news of the month and we cover it on page 5, but in a sidelight to that closure, we have fielded a lot of calls from operators all over the place since the news broke, all praising the Premier products.

If the closure sticks and Premier can't somehow be got running again, it's obvious that there's going to be a lot of operators around the world that will miss their reliable machines.

JAPAN IN "CRISIS"

When the chief of what is arguably coin-op's most successful company calls the situation in Japanese coin-op, a "crisis", you have to take notice, and that is exactly how Hayao Nakayama, boss of Sega described the current situation.

He wasn't trying to scare people, and he certainly can't be called a "doom and gloomer"; to our mind he was telling it like it is, Japanese coin-op is sick, it has been for some time and not much has been done about it. If it's let go, it will ultimately affect all of us as without a buoyant Japanese home market, manufacturers development costs will have to be cut drastically.

Nakayama pinpointed many of the problems as he saw them and closed by saying;

"We must realise the severity of the situation and find a way out"

We hope his audience at the Annual General Meeting of JAMMA, were listening.

ASIA & THE SUB CONTINENT

INDIA: The slight hiccup in the opening up of India that was caused by the election of a coalition Government a few months ago appears to be past history now as the new Government has declared it's intent to keep the process of liberalisation and encouragement of free enterprise moving forward.

This will enable the infant coin-op and associated entertainment industries to continue the expansion that is set to make India one of the biggest markets for amusement equipment in the world, and which should ensure some good business is done at both the TSI Trade Show in Mumbai (Bombay) this December and the AAMA sponsored event in New Delhi next February.

CHINA: Several Taiwanese companies are looking to move large quantities of equipment into China following the crack down in parts of Taiwan on gaming and gray area machines. Though preaching the Gospel of amusement machines to the Chinese, they are really only interested in illegal gaming

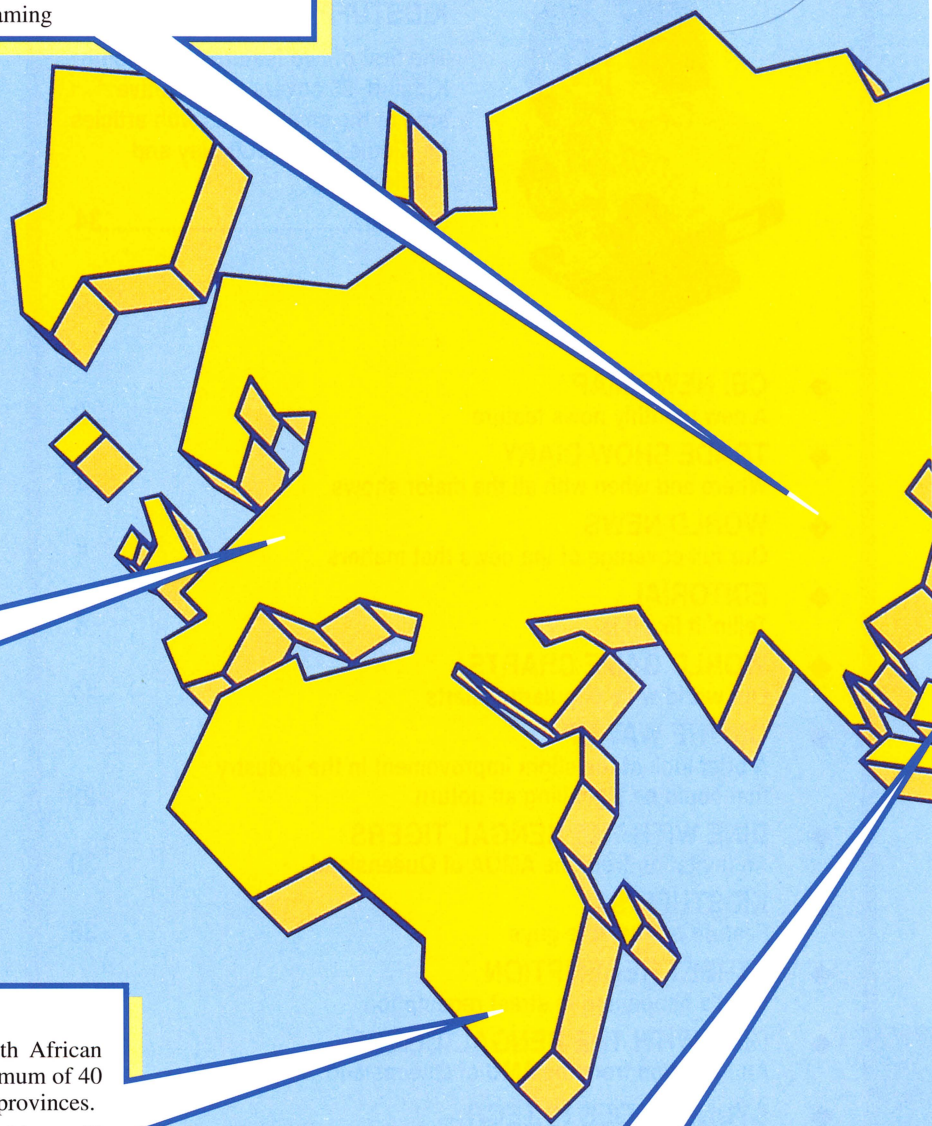
EUROPE & THE UK

UNITED KINGDOM: The enormity of the task to complete Sega's complex, new Sega World project at the Trocadero has forced the opening date to be put back a bit and the centre now looks like opening about the time you read this (early August)

Those who have seen the project develop, are blown away by what Sega are doing and there seems little doubt that when Sega World, London opens, the world is going to see something really special in the way of entertainment.

EUROPE: Ralph Coppola of American manufacturing company, ICE Inc is as we write doing a whirlwind tour of the UK, Germany and Spain showing major companies the new video simulator ICE have developed, titled Skimaxx.

With good orders in hand from the US, Coppola is confident the game will traverse all borders and having detected a far more positive attitude by European operators into the area of family entertainment, is expecting big sales in Europe.



SOUTH AFRICA

Late June saw the promulgation of the South African National Gambling Bill which provides for a maximum of 40 casinos in the Republic to be divided among nine provinces.

The Bill also lays down that all gambling machines will be linked to a central monitoring system and gives a very broad definition of a "gambling machine" that will effectively outlaw any grey area machines, but also appears at face value to herald problems for amusement machine operators, as if it's made Law and fully enforced, it is capable of wiping out Redemption games, merchandising machines and anything that gives players something of value in return for their money, regardless of any skill factor that may be present.

The definition reads:

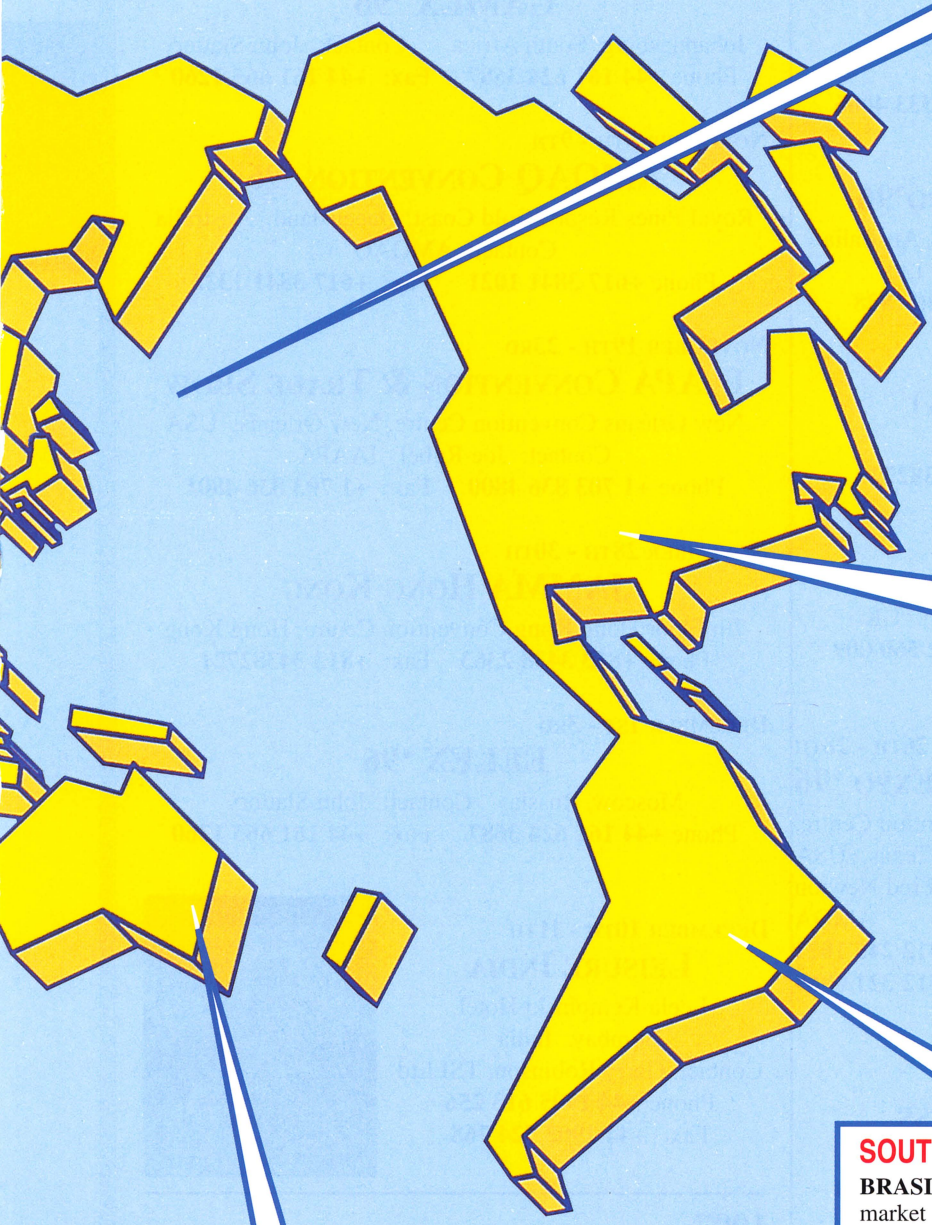
"Gambling Machine" means any electronic or electro mechanical device, contrivance or machine which, upon insertion of a coin, token or similar object, or upon payment of any consideration, is available to be played or operated, and the playing or operation of which, whether by reason of the skill of the player or as a result of chance, or both, may entitle the person playing or operating the machine, or any other person, to receive cash or anything of value.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

MALAYSIA: Already home of the tallest building in the world in the Petronas Twin Towers, there are now plans for Kuala Lumpur to have the longest building in the world, and probably the biggest indoor theme park in the world as well.

The planned new development is called Linear City, and it will cover a 14 kilometre stretch of the Klang river which bisects downtown KL, with the centrepiece being a huge shopping mall and office development, to be built on stilts over the river, named Giga World. When completed Giga World, will be two kilometres long and 12 storeys high, and one complete floor of this mammoth building is said to be earmarked for an indoor theme park and associated entertainments. The project, which has the Prime Ministers full support has been proposed by a group that includes the huge Berjaya Group, who are among other things, Malaysias largest operator of amusement machines.

international NewsMap



JAPAN

All eyes are turned towards the AM Show and buying is at a standstill in Japan after late rumours (or leaks) indicating there will be several major releases made at the big Tokyo event early next month.

Konami Co have reported on the fiscal year ending March 1996 and are the first of the companies that suffered big losses last year to come back into profit with the consolidated results showing a net figure of 1,316 million yen (approximately US$12.5 million) profit. The company have forecast a 5,000 million yen ($46 million) profit for 1997.

UNITED STATES

Another big contender for the video game dollar comes to light with the news that Taiwanese computer manufacturer, Acer, currently selling $1.5 billion worth of computers into the US market annually and the 7th biggest PC maker in the world are set to introduce a low cost ($500) special purpose computer for domestic use that can do just three things, *provide instant access to the Internet, run Windows '95 and play most of the popular consumer games.*

Computer makers have not been seen as a competitor of coin-op in the past, but what makes Acer different and likely to be very successful (and further shrink the coin-op dollar) is that they are providing exactly what consumers have been crying out for, unlike other computer makers who load their products with heaps of hi tech stuff that the consumer will never use, but still have to pay a 'motza' for.

****

Pinball manufacturers are feeling the pain of the world wide slump in Pinball revenue with Premier Technology forced to close and Williams/Bally working hard to cut costs and streamline production.

They're hopeful the worst is over, as it appears the silver ball has hit bottom and in some areas of the US, is starting to slowly improve, but no one is predicting any real improvement until mid next year

AUSTRALIA

Rumours persist that Kerry Packer, the triple billionaire owner of Channel 9 TV and sundry other companies, is trying to offload his 40% share in Village Nine Leisure, the company that operates the Intencity centres and recently won operating rights for the gold plated Penrith Panthers site.

Apparently Packer is not all that impressed with the profit potential of Village Nine Leisure and is reluctant to pour any more money into it. The rumours were further fueled when Packer sold off his shareholding in Village RoadShow for an $80 million profit, which the money market believes he will put towards a $1.5 billion bid for Hollywood's MGM studios.

SOUTH AMERICA

BRASIL: Despite any concerns of the international money market that Brasil's economy could be slipping back, the amusement machine and associated industries showed at last months SALEX that they have plenty of confidence by turning out in big numbers and in many cases, buying as if there was no tomorrow.

While cranes were still a pretty hot item, Redemption games and Pinballs appeared to be the big winners with dedicated video games also attracting buyers.

CHILE: The Anti-Counterfeiting Advisory Group (AAG), in co-operation with the First Criminal Court of Santiago, Chile, have conducted raids against SangYong Suh for illegally converting Sega consumer systems for commercial use in violation of Chilean copyright and trademark laws.

The raids were conducted by the Chile Investigative Police and interface boards were seized.

TRADE SHOW DIARY 1996

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SEPTEMBER 1ST - 3RD

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SEPTEMBER 12TH -14TH

AM SHOW '96 (JAMMA)

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SEPTEMBER 24TH - 26TH

LEISURE INDUSTRY WEEK

National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham. UK
Phone **+44 1932 564 455** Fax: **+44 1932 560 009**

SEPTEMBER 26TH - 28TH

AMOA EXPO '96

Dallas Convention Centre,
Dallas, Texas. USA
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AMOA
Phone **+1312 245 1021**
Fax: **+1 312 321 6869**

OCTOBER 1ST - 3RD

WORLD GAMING CONGRESS

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OCTOBER 10TH - 12TH

FUN EXPO '96

Sands Expo & Convention Centre, Las Vegas. USA
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OCTOBER 10TH - 11TH

FER - INTERAZAR

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OCTOBER 19TH - 21ST

WORLD WATERPARK SYMPOSIUM, ETC.

Florida, USA Contact: Statia Leeds
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OCTOBER 30TH - NOVEMBER 1ST

GAMEX '96

Johannesburg, South Africa Contact: John Slattery
Phone **+44 161 624 3687** Fax: **+44 161 665 1260**

NOVEMBER 5TH - 9TH

AMOAQ CONVENTION '96

Royal Pines Resort, Gold Coast, Queensland. Australia
Contact: AMOAQ
Phone **+617 3841 1021** Fax: **+617 3841 1332**

NOVEMBER 19TH - 23RD

IAAPA CONVENTION & TRADE SHOW

New Orleans Convention Centre, New Orleans. USA
Contact: Joe Rubel IAAPA
Phone **+1 703 836 4800** Fax: **+1 703 836 4801**

NOVEMBER 28TH - 30TH

JAMMA HONG KONG

7th Floor Hong Kong Convention Centre, Hong Kong
Phone **+813 3438 2363** Fax: **+813 34382721**

DECEMBER 1ST - 3RD

EELEX '96

Moscow, Russia Contact: John Slattery
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DECEMBER 10TH - 11TH

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Bombay. India
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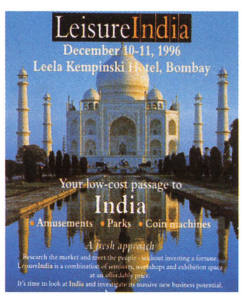
Fax: **+44 1905 724 768**



1997

JANUARY 21st - 24th 1997

ATE INTERNATIONAL '97

Earls Court Exhibition Centre, London. UK
Contact: Peter Rusbridge, Dawn Milroy
Phone **+44 171 713 0302** Fax: **+44 171 713 0446**

JANUARY 22nd - 25th 1997

IMA '97

Frankfurt Fairgrounds, Frankfurt. Germany
Contact: Petra Lassahn
Phone **+49 211 90191-83** Fax: **+49 211 90191-27**

United States

ONGOING PINBALL SLUMP CLAIMS A VICTIM IN PREMIER TECHNOLOGY CLOSURE

The ongoing slump in world Pinball markets has taken it's toll on one of the coin-op industry's most famous names, that of Gottlieb Pinballs, made since 1984 by Premier Technology Inc of Chicago.

The plug was pulled on the company on July 9th, ending a battle for survival that has been going on since late last year when world Pinball sales slumped dramatically and the high profile, costly to manufacture, licensed game Waterworld, was one of the major casualties.

Will Barb Wire be the last Pinball game made under the famous Gottlieb name?

The market has deteriorated more since then and sales of all Pinballs including the two Premier/Gottlieb models, Mario Andretti and Barb Wire have been very poor.

The resulting closure has seen the departure of the bulk of the workforce, and the company assets assigned to a trustee for the secured creditors, for bulk sale early this month, but this course may open a window of opp-ortunity as there's a distinct possibility that such a sale will fail to find buyers.

If that was to occur, there would have to be a chance of some sort that the company could be re-established.

As we understand it the amount of money needed is around $5 million, not that much on todays standards, when you consider it would buy basic control of a proven Pinball manufacturer, an excellent brand name, and a company that will have been thinned down to a *'lean, mean, fighting machine'* through the lead up to the closure.

In short, a company that will be in a great position to take advantage of the expected increase in Pinball sales and popularity, which is generally tipped for the second half of next year.

Premier's Gil Pollock

Premier Technology chief and part owner, Gil Pollock who has worked tirelessly over the past 12 months or so to keep the company afloat, is still in their 'batting'.

Cash Box for one, would love to see him hit a homer.

United States

A LOT MORE THAN A PINBALL ?

Capcom Pinball have been the subject of much discussion lately, and there's talk again of Sega reopening negotiations to buy the company, but despite all this, the design and engineering staff have been quietly working away on new games and concepts: One of these, themed on the sport with the worlds biggest following, will be unveiled at the AMOA Expo.

And what's interesting about this is that we hear the company has made a record number of Patent applications on features of the game which we have heard described as "a lot more than a Pinball"

Japan

NAKAYAMA SPEAKS ON COIN-OP "CRISIS"

After being reappointed President of the powerful Japanese Manufacturers Association (JAMMA), at the annual general meeting of that body, Sega chief Hayao Nakayama made some interesting comments on what he sees as a "crisis" in coin-op, he said;

"The last year has seen arcade operation decrease conspicuously and the situation of the domestic coin-op business is far from reassuring. There are various reasons such as arcades becoming the haunt of mania game players, games enjoyable by everyone being few in number, and 32 bit home video games quickly catching up with coin-op games. The control by the 'Fuei Law' (a Japanese law which prohibits the operation of redemption games) is another major cause"

He closed by saying: *"We must realise the severity of the situation and find a way out"*

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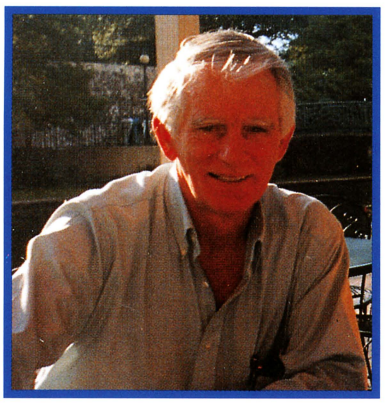

Tellin' It Like It Is

With Jack Rodios

If you hire videos for home viewing, you'll be well aware that when the movie first comes out and while it remains 'hot', you pay a much higher price for it than you will a couple of months down the line. For instance, our local store starts them off at $4 for overnight viewing, and unless it's a really top movie it goes to $3, then $2 a night within the next four months or so, when it will do the big plunge to $2 a week.

The same goes for the hire of consumer video games with the only difference being that different systems have varying prices, the Sony PlayStation games for example are dearer than the old 16 bit games, but the scaled drop as the game goes off the boil is always there.

If you're into computers, you'll know that similar discounting prevails when software or hardware is superceded, or simply loses it's appeal and runs out of steam in the market.

Most things work this way, and it's not any brilliant new marketing plan, it's been going on for as long as I can remember. Brought up in a relatively poor working family, I can remember as a kid being sent to the shop for a loaf of 'yesterday's bread' because it was a penny or two cheaper than that day's bread.

The guy in the video shop is not a goose, he knows that if he keeps a movie or a Nintendo game at $4 a night, it will sit on the shelf and rot, no one will rent it. The computer guy knows that if he doesn't discount stale goods to a price customers will pay, they'll sit on the shelf forever too, and the old baker I refer to was no mug either, much better a penny or two less for yesterday's loaf, than throwing it in the garbage

Why then, do we get the flack we get in this industry, when we suggest a reduction in game play prices for games like Daytona, which have been in the market for around two years, and in those countries where high price of play prevails, are showing a serious decline in income?

That's a question that befuddles me, though it is noticeable that most of the flack comes from those who have prime, high volume locations, which can sustain a higher price much longer than locations in the suburbs or country town. Even if, in fairness to them, we concede that they probably need the higher play price to pay their higher rents, etc, we still have to ask a second question;

Are smaller operators that don't have prime sites, and who are doing it tough, under any obligation to assist the big guys in holding their high prices up, by holding their lesser site prices at a level that must ultimately destroy any chance of them operating profitably?

And I don't think you need this old carpenter to answer that one.

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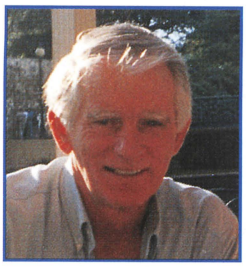

Contando 'lo como és.

por Jack Rodios

Si Ud. alquila videos para verlos en casa, conoce que cuando la película es nueva y mientras permanece "caliente" en cartelera, uno paga un precio mucho mas alto, que él que se paga un par de meses mas adelante. Por ejemplo, nuestro video club local comienza alquilando a $4.- por el alquiler de una película por una noche, y si no resulta realmente una gran película, baja a $ 3.- y luego a $ 2 por noche, dentro de los siguientes 4 meses, cuando ocurre la gran caída, a $ 2.- por una semana de alquiler.

Lo mismo ocurre con los video juegos hogareños, con la diferencia que, al corresponder sistemas diferentes, varian sus precios, siendo por ejemplo, los juegos para la PlayStation Sony, un poco mas costosos que los viejos juegos de 16 bits, pero la escala se va reduciendo a medida que el juego va perdiendo su atractivo como novedad.

Si uno está en el mundo de las computadoras, conoce que un sistema similar de descuentos prevalece cuando el software o el hardware es reemplazado, o simplemente cuando éste pierde su atractivo y deja de estar en la corriente principal del mercado.

La mayoría de las cosas funcionan de esta forma y esto, no es ningun plan nuevo brillante de comercialización, ha funcionado desde que yo tengo uso de memoria. Habiendo crecido en una familia trabajadora relativamente pobre, puedo recordar, que de niño me mandaban a los negocios a comprar una tajada del "pan del día anterior" porque costaba uno o dos peniques mas baratos que el pan fresco de ese día.

El hombre en el video club no es ningun ganso, él sabe que si mantiene una película o un juego Nintendo a $ 4.- por el alquiler de una noche, él mismo quedará dormido en el estante y se echará a perder, nadie lo alquilará. El hombre de computación sabe que si él no hace descuentos sobre las mercaderías trilladas, a un precio que el cliente esté dispuesto a pagar, éstas también dormirán en el estante para siempre, y el pan viejo al que yo me referí no era tampoco un desperdicio, mejor uno o dos peniques mas barato para el pan del día anterior, que tirarlo a la basura.

Entonces, porque recibimos la publicidad que recibimos en esta industria, cuando sugerimos un descuento en el precio de las jugadas de juegos como Daytona, que han estado en el mercado por aproximadamente dos años; y en aquellos paises donde prevalecen los precios altos, se ven grandes reducciones en los ingresos?

Esta es una pregunta que me confunde aunque, es digno de atenciõn que la mayoría de la publicidad proviene de aquellos que tienen salones importantes de alto consumo y que pueden sostener un precio mayor por un período mucho mas prolongado que un salõn en un suburbio o en un pueblo campestre. Incluso sí, para ser justos con ellos, coincidimos que ellos probablemente necesiten de un precio mayor por jugada por sus mayores costos de alquiler, etc., aún así debemos hacer una segunda pregunta; tienen, los operadores que no poseen salones selectos, y a quienes les resulta dificil y duro mantenerse; obligaciõn alguna de apoyar a los grandes tipos sosteniendo los precios altos por jugada, sostenéndolos en un nivel que en definitiva destruye cualquier oportunidad de que ellos operen con ganancias?

Creo que Ud. no necesita que este viejo carpintero responda a ésto.

The Netherlands

NEW COMMERCIAL TECHNICAL MANAGER FOR SUZO

Suzo, one of the worlds biggest component manufacturers have appointed Juan Gomez, (pictured above) formerly of Barcrest as the company's Commercial Technical Manager.

The company's Robert van Enkhuijzen commented on the how pleased Suzo was to have Juan Gomez with them and said his main responsibility will be to further developing Suzo's position in the gaming market and also establish a position for new products such as the Spintek Managers System and Cube Hopper which will be available this month

Brasil

EVERYTHING UP FOR SALEX '96

With the number of exhibitors up, the pre show attendance registrations up, and South American operators confidence up, Sao Paulo's SALEX which is just starting as we go to print, looks very much like being even a bigger success than last years big event.

We'll bring you a full report in next months magazine

United Kingdom

ATEI '97 TO EXPAND IN ALL THREE SECTORS

Earl's Court, London is likely to be bursting at the seams come late January next year with all three sectors showing a substantial increase in the number of exhibitors, on this years record breaking event.

The newly established Parks & Attractions segment is showing the biggest gains, but confirmed bookings for the all three sectors, Coin-op Games, Gaming, Parks & Attractions, are at this stage of proceedings, far greater than in any previous year, making 1997 likely to be another record breaker.

And with the ATEI team fielding hosts of registration enquiries weekly from all over the world, and the big show still almost six months away, foreign attendance also looks likely to be up again on this years excellent figures of over 4000.

Clearly the place to be, come January 21st.

Note: The "Off the Record Club" will again meet during ATEI, and we hear there is to be a Cricket Coaching Clinic for the Brits, and a Golf Clinic for the visiting descendents of British convicts, hosted by the ATEI team who apparently walked away with the '19th Hole Award' at the recent BACTA Golf Classic

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Scorpion™ 9000

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The only electronic dart game that gives the player the POWER to play the games they want to play. From the ***'01*** games and ***Cricket*** to ***Burma Road*** and ***Wild & Crazy Cricket*** only the 9000 has it all. The Solo Challenger allows you to play against the computer while the ***Equal Darts option*** makes head-to-head competition even more challenging. Our point-per- dart and spot cricket handicapping features ensure a fair game for all and last but not least our ***New 321 ZAP*** game is adding more casual play to the 9000 than ever before. Now is the time to think electronic darts–Now is the time to think ***SCORPION 9000***.

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Cash Box International GAME RATINGS

Cyclone
No 1 Redemption Game
August, 1996

REDEMPTION GAMES

ROLL DOWNS

1 Spin to Win
2 Rollin' for Riches
3 Clown Rolldown
4 Twenty One
5 Rolldown

SPORTS GAMES

1 Super Shot D/x
2 Full Court Frenzy II
3 Rage in the Cage
4 Full Court Fever
5 Two Minute Drill
6 UBQB II
7 Penalty Shoot Out
8 Shoot to Win II

SHOOTING GAMES

1 Six Gun Saloon
2 Water Race
3 Boom Ball
4 Cosmo Gang

VIDEO

1 Solar Spin
2 Mouse Attack
3 The Dealer
4 Double Cheese
5 Ghost Hunter

WHACKERS

1 Ribbit Racin'
2 Wacky Gator
3 Spider Splattin'
4 Cracky Crab

ALLEY BOWLERS

1 Skee Ball Too
2 ICE Ball
3 Pro Striker
4 Smart Ball

BALL TOSS

1 Simple Simon
2 Ring Toss
3 Skee Toss BC
4 Bozo's Grand Prize

COIN PUSHERS

1 Jungle Jive
2 Klondike
3 Dino Valley
4 Rock & Roll

COIN SHOOTERS

1 Dinoscore
2 Dinoworld
3 Flip'n Win
4 Turf Wars

COIN ROLLDOWNS

1 Smokin' Token
2 Camelot
3 Home Run Hitter
4 Chicken Dash
5 Pharoah's Phantasy

CRANES

1 Neo Carnival
2 Space Crane
3 Watch/Gift Box
4 Snack Attacker

KIDS GAMES

1 Mini Dunxx
2 Shoot to Win Junior
3 Awesome Toss'em
4 Li'l Dump the Ump

NOVELTIES

1 Cyclone
2 Colorama
3 Spin for Tickets
4 Triple Play
5 Cyclone Junior
6 Swamp Stomp

ENGLAND

VIDEO CONVERSION

1 Tekken 2
2 Street Fight. Alpha 2
3 Metal Slug
4 Virtua Striker

VIDEO DEDICATED

1 Time Crisis
2 Alpine Racer
3 Virtua Cop 2
4 Daytona USA

PINBALLS

1 Attack from Mars
2 Goldeneye 007
3 Theatre of Magic

BRASIL

VIDEO CONVERSION

1 Street Fighter Zero 2
3 Metal Slug
2 Tekken 2
3 Virtua Striker

VIDEO DEDICATED

1 Time Crisis
2 Daytona USA
3 Rally Champ
4 Virtua Cop 2

PINBALLS

1 Attack from Mars
2 Mario Andretti
3 Theatre of Magic

SINGAPORE

VIDEO CONVERSION

1 Last Bronx
2 Tekken 2
3 Street Fight. Zero 2

VIDEO DEDICATED

1 Time Crisis
2 Daytona USA
3 Gunblade NY

PINBALLS

1 Attack from Mars
2 Congo
3 Goldeneye 007

Cash Box International GAME RATINGS

JAPAN

VIDEO CONVERSION

1 Last Bronx
2 Decathlete
3 Virtua Fighter 2
4 Street Fight. Alpha 2
5 Tekken 2
6 Sup. World Stadium
7 Run & Gun 2
8 Virtua Striker
9 Powerful Proyakyu
10 Strikers 1945

VIDEO DEDICATED

1 Gunblade D/x
2 Virtua On
3 Time Crisis
4 Ace Driver Vic Lap
5 Virtua Cop 2
6 Alpine Racer
7 Rally Champ
8 Dirt Dash
9 Rave racer
10 Point Blank

PINBALLS

1 Pinball Magic
2 Jurassic Park
3 Congo
4 Road Show
5 Frankenstein

UNITED STATES

VIDEO GAMES

1 Tekken 2
2 Golden Tee 3D Golf
3 Megatouch IV
4 Tourn. Solitaire
5 Metal Slug
6 Street Fight. Alpha 2
7 Soul Edge
8 Virtua Fighters 2
9 Neo Turf Masters
10 Run & Gun 2

VIDEO DEDICATED

1 Time Crisis
2 Daytona USA
3 Cruisn' USA
4 Alpine Racer
5 Area 51
6 NBA Hang Time
7 Virtua Cop 2
8 Killer Instinct 2
9 Manx TT
10 Rally Champ

PINBALLS

1 Attack from Mars
2 Twister
3 Theatre of Magic
4 Apollo 13
5 Barb Wire

Time Crisis
World's No 1 Game
August, 1996

AUSTRALIA

VIDEO CONVERSION

1 Street Fighter Zero 2
2 Tekken 2
3 Metal Slug
4 Virtua Fighter 2
5 Soul Edge
6 Neo Turf Master
7 Dung'ns & Dragon 2
8 Ultimate MK3
9 Virtua Striker
10 Run & Gun 2

VIDEO DEDICATED

1 Time Crisis
2 Rally Champ
3 Alpine Racer
4 Daytona USA
5 Virtua Cop 2
6 Point Blank
7 Ace Driver Vic. Lap
8 Midnight Run
9 Manx TT
10 Cyber Cycles

PINBALLS

1 Attack from Mars
2 Goldeneye 007
3 Theatre of Magic
4 Congo
5 No Fear
6 Big Hurt
7 Apollo 13
8 Batman Forever
9 Stargate
10 Shaq Attaq

HONG KONG

VIDEO CONVERSION

1 Last Bronx
2 Ulter Champion
3 Streetfighter Alpha 2
4 Striker 1945
5 Decathlete
6 Battle Garegga
7 Neo Turf Master

VIDEO DEDICATED

1 Rave Racer
2 Alpine Racer
3 Gunblade NY
4 Time Crisis
5 Virtua Striker

PINBALLS

1 Apollo 13
2 Shaq Attaq
3 Stargate

GERMANY

VIDEO CONVERSION

1 Metal Slug
2 Tekken 2
3 Virtua Striker
4 Neo Turf Masters
5 Soul Edge

VIDEO DEDICATED

1 Alpine Racer
2 Time Crisis
3 Rally Champ
4 Area 51
5 Daytona USA
6 Cruisn' USA

PINBALLS

1 Attack from Mars
2 Mario Andretti
3 Theatre of Magic
4 Goldeneye 007

United States

WMS TO RESTRUCTURE OPERATIONS

The Board of WMS Ind-ustries have given approval for a major restructuring of the company's three arms of operations that are aimed at enhancing shareholders values and reducing expenses related to the Pinball division.

If all the actions authorised by the Board are put into place, the businesses formerly operating under the WMS Industries umbrella will operate as three seperate, publicly traded corporations;

1. A corporation which controls the Puerto Rico based Hotel/Casino division which will be completely sold off to WMS stockholders.

2. A corporation which designs, manufactures and markets coin-operated video games and publishes/licenses consumer video games, of which 15% will be sold to the public in a new offering next year.

3. AndWMS Industries which will design, manufacture and market casino gaming devices, video lottery terminals and coin-operated pinball games, (and own 85% of the video game *corporation)*

The Board also authorised cost reductions in the Pinball division owing to the world slump, and for more resources to be directed to the growing, casino gaming device division.

****

Despite any restructuring or slowdown in sales, Williams are still expected to have a big showing at AMOA Expo in Dallas next month.

Rumours persist that the company will exhibit a 'red hot' sequel to the incredibly successful Cruisn' USA driving game which has held it's spot in the charts for over 2 years. We don't know if that's right or not, but a lot of operators are hoping it is.

United States

CHANGES AT THE TOP OF CAPCOM COIN-OP INC

More changes at Capcom Coin-Op Inc, see Mr Minoru Sasatini who has over 20 years experience in the coin-op industry, take over the President's role, allowing Ryuichi Hirata to return his full attention to his principal position as President of Capcom USA, and Takashi Kubo-zono, formerly Director of Special Projects, take over from David Poole who left the company rec-ently as Director of Engineering.

Another big change sees Renee Lopez, long serving chief of inter-national sales leave the company and he will be replaced by former Bally VP of sales , Steve Blattspieler.

Lopez has been with the company since the beginning of the Pinball project and having spent all his working life in the coin-op industry, will continue working in it in another capacity

TOUCH DOWN
1. AIM COIN CHUTE AT THE END ZONE TARGETS.
2. INSERT COIN, USE YOUR SKILL AND JUDGEMENT TO AVOID THE OPPOSITION ON THE PLAYFIELD.
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- The latest concept in moving belt games.
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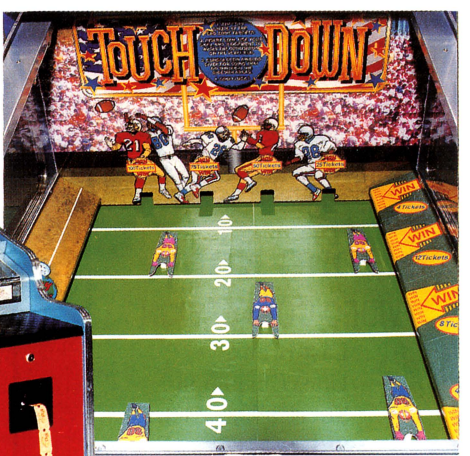
- Score touchdowns for higher awards.



- Cash Token or Ticket Payout

Amusement Machine Manufacturers & Distributors

Harry Levy

Harry Levy Amusement Contractor Ltd.

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Broadstairs, Kent CT10 2 LF England

Telephone: +44 1843 866 464 Fax: +44 1843 860 144

United States

DYNAMO'S NEW TOP BRASS HOCKEY

A table game that will have it's first major US showing at AMOA Expo is Dynamo's classy, Top Brass Hockey.

Incorporating all the working features of Dynamo's ever popular Air Hockey tables, Top Brass Hockey is dressed up in the blue, black and brass trim of the company's very successful Top Brass Pool table and is sure to attract a lot operator interest in Dallas.

The AMOA EXPO Dallas 1996 SEPTEMBER 26-28

SMART NEW CRANE

Smart Industries will have their first major US showing of the all new "Pit Stop Crane", at AMOA Expo '96. The "Pit Stop" is an exciting new crane that is operated by way of a steering wheel, gear shifter and gas pedal, looks magnificent, and has a sound system that would do a big video game proud

SEGA KICK GOAL WITH SUPER HOT PINBALL LICENSES

Sega Pinballs have followed the doctrine of licensed themes for their Pinballs religiously and there has been times when they haven't been all that lucky with a movie they have themed a game on flopping in the cinemas, but in this regard they have certainly "kiicked a goal" with their two latest games, Twister and the new game, Independence Day. which will be shown at AMOA Expo.

Twister is one of the Northern summers really big box office hits and was thought likely to be the hit of the year when it grossed $100 million odd in it's first 9 days, but a few weeks later, along comes Independence Day and it has grossed an all time record of $126 million in it's first 7 days.

Now we all know that the license doesn't make the game, but boy, when the licenses are as hot as Twister and Independence Day, they surely must help the coin tinkle into the old cash boxes

BIG WHEEL

Pushers People Play

JUNGLE JIVE

- Fire coins into car on rotating wheel to activate coin cascade onto pusher box
- Automatic coin firing action on coin entry
- Cash, Token or Ticket payout
- Available in 1 and 2 player models
- All coins played are active
- Rotating Big Wheel feature

- Available in 6, 4, 3, 2 & 1 Players
- With Skill Play Function
- Exciting Playfield

A NEW CONCEPT IN PUSHERS from Harry Levy

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MEMO FROM THE MIDEAST

from Phillip D. Deighton

Marhaba! Greetings!

In my first memo last month, I referred to the sort of special problems manufacturers and other business people may encounter with equipment which is unsuitable in the region because of the "3 C's" - climate, culture and customs.

Although the Middle East is not the largest amusements market in the world, it is sizeable, continuing to grow and cannot be ignored. For these reasons, the serious supplier needs to know how best to pitch its products and approach to optimise sales.

It is worth the effort to understand your customer and his needs. Breezing in with the world's best rat trap may be a waste of time a week after the Pied Piper of Hamelin has called. Research always pays off, but don't stop at the demographics and news gleaned from CBI before ordering the air ticket and packing the bag with brochures.

The Middle East enjoys a distinct way of life, different from anything you may have experienced before. The Islamic culture embraces everything - social and business behaviour, legal and financial systems - the lot! Not to get to grips with this basic fact can lead, at the very least, to you going home with as many brochures in the bag as you set off with.

You may know that pork in any form is banned to Muslims and most Islamic countries prohibit its import. The same applies to pigs, so if your equipment features tuskers, change it. Similarly, the human form depicted by graphics or models may be precluded and certainly any partially clad female image will be disallowed (and that includes Street Fighter graphics and "standard" western decoration on mobile rides). Make sure, too, that design work excludes the use of a cross, substitute with a crescent. Be aware that censorship is vigorously practiced so ensure the promotional video tapes and literature are screened before despatch, otherwise your customer may never see them.

It would also be a mistake to ask for someone's christian name. Make sure your receptionist asks, instead, for the first and family names! At meetings, use the customary greeting for the time of day and try not to show the soles of your shoes by crossing your legs - it's sometimes regarded as an insult.

If you are introduced to a Muslim woman, don't shake hands. Equally, if you're a woman and introduced to a strict Muslim man, do not shake hands and try not to make eye contact. And ladies, do dress modestly - that means covering the arms, cleavage and legs below the knee. In some countries you will have to wear the black abayah.

Now you will notice that I am using words like "may" and "sometimes". This is because not all Middle East countries are alike and some are more relaxed than others. Visitors to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates are often surprised, for example, to find they can buy pork products and alcohol and that the whole culture is open and multinational. Some make the mistake of thinking all countries are like this. Wrong! Just up the road from Dubai is Sharjah and there matters are very different - and you're still in the UAE and haven't even crossed a border. Do the homework carefully.

Letters of Credit are the usual way of paying for things and the Arabian banks are well geared up to dealing internationally. However, do prepare paperwork carefully and watch out for the costs of "legalisation" as well as any Israeli trade boycott requirements. Allow time in your delivery schedule for any trans-shipping (say, at Dubai for onward movement by sea or rad) and port formalities. Use an experienced MidEast shipper, preferably with a head office here, or be prepared to suffer the penalties.

None of the foregoing should put anyone off from exploring and exploiting the Middle East market. The people are warm, friendly and very hospitable. Business can be very good - particularly if you respect their culture and are as good at negotiations as the Arabs are!

Philip Deighton runs Deighton International, a Consultant company in Leisure & Tourism that specialises in operational management and business development. He has lived and worked in the Middle East for three years, and also runs the Association of Arabian Amusement Attractions (the 4A's) Philip is based in the UK and has an office in the Middle East, contact number, phone or fax is +44 1489 570289

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LAZER-TRON.....

No1.....And Going Further Ahead

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Lots of fun for 2 players against each other for one person against the game and Swamp Stomp is attractive to all ages with big ticket rewards

UPDATE KITS
New Low Cost Kits Will Be Available

MINERS REVENGE™

Lazer-Tron has merged Redemption with Video to produce this exciting new shooter, Miners Revenge.

Players are hurled through a haunted mine where they must"slime" as many ghosts as they can and find secret buried treasures.

Awesome graphics, non violent family fun that can be upgraded with low cost kits.

In Spin-To-Win, players get 3 attempts to stop the spinning hands on desired slots. Each slot is worth a certain number of tickets, bankrupt, lose a turn, or jackpot. Players can win up to 60 tickets on a single coin, but must avoid the Bankrupt slot, which will wipe out their earnings while trying to stop on the Jackpot on all three spins

SPIN-TO-WIN™

RING TOSS™

Bringing the all-time favourite of the Midway to your location, Lazer-Tron's Ring Toss game is a fully automated version of the all time classic that players can't resist.

Players get five rings to toss over the Coke bottles and games can be linked for Super Jackpots. Ring Toss is an an ideal game for all the family

And it's completely 'cheat-proof' with Lazer-Tron's patented sensor system.

ROLLIN' FOR RICHES ™

Players will be rockin' and rollin' on Lazer-Tron's new hit, roll-down game, Rollin' For Riches. Roll up to 5 balls per game to get specific numbers on the mechanical, spinning dice on the back wall. Players will try to form the best combinations to win as many tickets as possible on this exciting roll-down game.

It's a winner !

PHARAOH'S FANTASY ™

Pharaoh's Fantasy is the most interactive roll-down game ever produced. Players get up to 20 rapid firing coins to fire at ten target slots in this exciting Egyptian themed game.

Pharaoh's Fantasy can be operated on any coin, debit card or Bill acceptor.

WHEELIN-N-DEALIN ™

Players get 3 attempts to stop the spinning hands on desired slots with each slot being worth a number of tickets.

Players can win up to 50 tickets on a single coin, but must always avoid the Bankrupt slot which will wipe out their winnings

PITCH-IT

Lazer-Tron has once again brought an all-time favourite Midway game to Redemption with this fully automated version of the classic coin-toss. Pitch-It is a sure fire winner. Players get six tokens for a quarter (adjustable) to pitch into the targets which have values of from 5 to 100 tickets. Lazer-Tron's patented OVS system detects if the coins are on targets and prevents cheating. Family fun at it's best.

PIRATES GOLD ™

Players try to navigate their coins through the pins into the target hole in this fast paced coin-drop game. Pirates Gold features a "play till you win" style, unique to coin-drop games

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Cash Box International Magazine Advertising

United States

BENCHMARK TESTS 'BIG ONE' WITH BIG HAUL

Benchmark Entertainment, the Florida based redemption game manufacturer are currently testing a new game titled Big Haul that has everyone in the place grinning from ear to ear, quite certain they have another winner on their hands.

The company is also completing development of another new game titled Slam Bingo for release late this year or early 1997

And in their spare time, they have produced a plug-in, prize dispensing unit that can be simply fitted to Spin for Tickets, which is doing some great business around the world, and the new Slam Bingo. The dispensing unit will allow the games to pay out small prizes as they are won, enabling them to be operated on street sites or any other sites where there is no redemption counter.

Australia

PRE JUDGEMENT NERVES PLAY BIG PART IN SALES SLOW DOWN

The lead up to the imminent release of the judgement in the parallel import case instigated by Sega Corp and Leisure & Allied Industries against distributors, Galaxy Electronics and Gottlieb Electronics for the import of Virtua Cop 2 and Daytona USA games is having a marked effect on sales of new equipment in Australia which has been the biggest buyer of dedicated games per head of population, in the world over the past two years..

As the day of judgement draws nearer, operators are pondering life without parallel imports should the judgement go against them, and the scenario they conjure up is hardly inductive to generating confidence in the future of coin-op in Australia.

Working on past prices when exclusive distribution was in force, operators have estimated that should Sega and LAI win their case, prices on dedicated games will rise a minimum of $10,000 across the board, with games like the coming Daytona 2 probably attracting a premium of closer to $20,000, giving it a sale price of around $60,000 (approx.$US 47,000)

But , even if Sega/LAI do win this case, and the best odds they appear to have under local Law are 50/50, it seems certain that there'll be an appeal no matter who gets the 'nod' in this judgement.

United Kingdom

ALL CASH MACHINES LIFT SPIRITS

After the first month of all cash machine operation, there's been a noticeable lift in UK operators enthusiasm for the industry.

The switch over to all cash machines is reported to be going exceptionally smoothly with only a few hiccups in amusement centre locations where the payout machines are not allowed to be played by those under 18, and have to be segregated.

Players are just as happy as operators apparently and takings on the new machines are in many cases much higher than expected

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Philippines

PACKER IN $1 BILLION MEGA ENTERTAINMENT DEVELOPMENT

Kerry Packer, Australia's wealthiest person with a personal worth of $3.5 billion is branching out into some big international deals with recent reports of a $1.5 billion bid being put together for the MGM studios in the USA and a huge development deal in the Philippines.

Through his company, Crown Consolidated Ltd, Packer has announced plans to build a $1 billion mega entertainment complex at the Clark Special Economic Zone (CSEZ) in Pampanga that will include a 1000 room hotel, Convention Centre, Casino, nightclubs and family entertainment centre.

Complimenting Packers complex will be a new Golf course, the second in the Zone, that will be built by a group of investors based in Los Angeles, California. The key to the popularity of the CSEZ is the new Clark International Airport that is nearing completion and which is expected to bring anything up to a million tourists a year into the CSEZ and neighbouring areas of Pampanga and Angeles City.

Canada

CINEPLEX GO WITH SEGA FOR GAME CENTRES

Cineplex Odeon Corp, the huge Toronto based cinema owner with 1501 cinema screens in 320 locations across Canada and the USA have announced a strategic alliance with Sega Gameworks for supply of equipment to their new game centres which will be established in existing theatres and/or adjoining properties.

Cineplex has formed a new division, titled "Cinescape" which will initially spend $10 million in establishing the interactive entertainment centres that they believe are of vital importance to the future of the company. As we understand the deal, Sega Gameworks will supply and operate most of the equipment used.

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Spain

GAELCO GEAR UP FOR BIG RUN ON SPEED UP

Spanish video game manufacturer Gaelco have geared up for a big production run of their new CG driving game Speed Up (pictured below) following unprecedented pre-production orders.

Confidence in the game is

exceptionally high now that it's almost completed an exhaustive and successful testing programme and subsequent fine tuning, that appears to suggest the company's big investment in building their own CG system, is going to pay off big.

A feature that really shone out in testing was the "You're last, you're out" feature which had players really battling at both ends of the game.

Speed Up will start shipping in a few weeks and will be available in a De Luxe model, a Twin and a single seater. It will surely be shown at Interazzar in Spain and we hear it could be shown at AMOA Expo in Dallas also.

United Kingdom

HARRY LEVY'S TOUCH DOWN A GAME FOR ALL MARKETS

The UK's Harry Levy Amusement Contractors, have released their American football themed redemption game, Touch Down which was first noticed when it attracted a lot of attention at ATEI in January.

The showing of the game in prototype form at ATEI was used to not only gauge the interest, but to get operator input and the ensuing months have been taken up with incorporating many suggestions made by operators, into the game, which the Harry Levy team are very confident about.

Though they will obviously welcome US operators acceptance of Touch Down, the makers believe the moving belt, coin roll down game is suitable for all world markets and this is not hard to agree with as playing the game does not require any real knowledge of American football, it's a quick, good to play, fun game that players can win big at, and that should be ample for most players no matter where they come from.

A very eye catching piece, Touch Down can pay out in cash, token or tickets, it's pretty well priced and is ready to start shipping now.

As with all Harry Levy products, we believe the game will be handled in the USA and possibly South America by Coastal Amusements Inc.

Japan

JALECO DRIVER

Jaleco are readying to release their very good looking CG driving game titled *Super GT 24 Hours* which is based on a 24 hour race and features beautifully rendered cars, an incredibly realistic sound system and a damage meter. More later on this one, it looks good, meanwhile it can be seen at the AM Show and AMOA Expo next month.

Singapore

SOUND LEISURE MAKE FURTHER INROADS INTO SOUTH EAST ASIA

It's taken a fair while and a lot of hard work, but Kevin Moss of the UK's Sound Leisure Ltd who moved to Singapore to live, and opened an office there early this year, believes the company is now starting to reap the benefits of the move with sales of both SL Jukeboxes and redemption games like the popular Buzzy Bee (pictured) and Gone Fishing, showing substantial increases.

Kevin is working the whole South East Asian region and we believe he is handling other manufacturers products as well as the Sound Leisure range in order to accommodate operators varying needs more fully.....and from what we hear it's working.

Sound Singapore can be contacted on +65 468 5075

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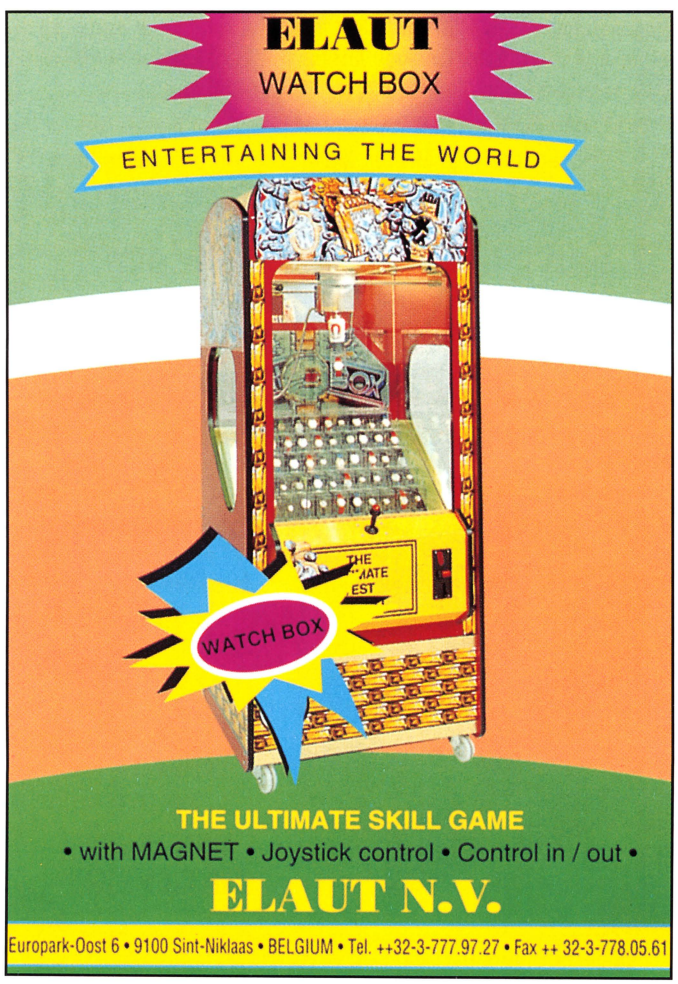
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Japan

"CATCH UP" COMPANIES ARE GAINING GROUND

Sega and Namco have long had the edge on rival manufacturers and will probably continue to do so for some time, but the coming release of what appear to be some very good games in various computer graphic (CG) based formats, indicate the gap between the big and smaller companies is narrowing and their edge will not have as big a bearing on the market as it has had in recent times.

Several companies have developed or are working on their own CG systems, while others, without the resources to develop their own CG technology have licensed existing systems, but regardless of where the technology is coming from, all are showing that they have the ability to put games together that are quite capable of matching the "big two"

In driving games, Jaleco's new "Super GT 24 Hours" on the Sega CG system (pictured at right) and Gaelco's "Speed Up" on a powerful CG system that the Spanish company developed internally are quality games that look set to do very well and Taito's new game "Side by Side" appears to be the best thing they have done for some time.

Konami, Data East, Tecmo, and Capcom, are also known to have major CG projects in hand and together with those mentioned earlier these smaller manufacturers are pulling out all stops to ensure that the days of Sega/Namco being able to dominate the market are numbered.

A Japanese company representative who prefers to remain un-named told Cash Box;

There is no set recipe for making a hit game, no ingredient labelled "Hit Game" that you take off the shelf and pour into the mix. Even with all the new technology, development of new games is still very much a lottery, Sega can't guarantee a game will be a hit, and nor can Namco".

"So now that we have almost equal technology, we have just as much chance of winning that lottery as anyone else in the game"

THE CHARTS

Gunblade NY has held it's place at the top of the charts in the the dedicated games list, ahead of Time Crisis and Virtual On with Ace Driver-Victory Lap, Virtua Cop, and Alpine Racer, following, making it a very similar line up to last month. The figures are so low however, (in the 7's and 6's) that it won't take much to knock them all out of the top bracket.

In Conversion games, Sega have made it to the top with Last Bronx (8.6) and Decathlete (8.2) in second place.

Sega's Virtua Fighter 2 remains in third place and is followed by SF Alpha 2, Tekken 2, Super World Stadium, a new Namco Baseball game, and then Run & Gun 2.

The only new games in the charts are conversion games, Last Bronx, Super World Stadium and Powerful Proyaky, a Konami game at #9. Pinballs are similar to last month and quiet.

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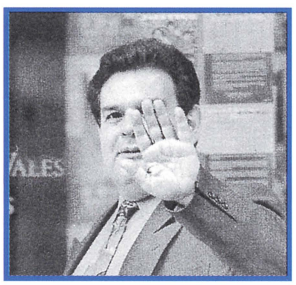
World News

People

9 BALL PROMOTER IN COURT

A scheme that at first glance appeared a legitimate attempt to promote 9 Ball Pool nationally in Australia, was shown to be nothing but a sham when bankrupt



promoter, Peter Dimitri (pic above) pleaded guilty in a Sydney Court to charges of being knowingly concerned in committing a criminal offense and managing a company while bankrupt.

By recruiting 'agents' with his "once in a lifetime opportunity" selling shares in Olympic 9 Ball Pty Ltd, a company that he'd set up, but couldn't legally be a director of, or manage, as a bankrupt, Dimitri collected over $400,000.00 in consulting fees, share sales and commissions, but when receivers moved into the company, the kitty was empty and there was no 9 Ball comp.

Dimitri, who was also picking up $100 entry fees from players on the promise of them playing in a $1 million US tournament, told the Court that the company was set up with no intention of defrauding anyone, and that it was his "entrepreneurial spirit" that got him into trouble.

The Magistrate 'bought' the spiel, lock stock and barrel, and gave Dimitri a smack on the wrist in the form of a piddling sentence of 200 hours community service.

Pinball

NEW PINS

Sega's next Pinball which will no doubt be shown at AMOA Expo in Dallas is titled *Independence Day* and themed on a coming movie of that name, and after that it's another movie themed game titled *Space Jam*, with the unusual teaming of Michael Jordan and Bugs Bunny.

Premier Technology are gearing up for Brooks & Dunn, a new game themed on the country music stars that just copped a major award at the Country Music Awards.

Williams already have Arabian Nights moving out of the factory, but will have at least one new piece for AMOA Expo, and Capcom will also have a new piece for the big Dallas show.

Casinos

HILTON TAKE BALLY CASINOS

Hilton Hotel Corp are set to take over the Bally casinos in a $3 billion deal that will make them in dollar terms, the biggest casino player in the USA.

Showing just how lucrative casinos can be under good management, the giant hotel group (pre Bally), have annual revenue of around $1.6 billion, half of which comes from it's 240 non casino hotels, while the other half comes from 10 hotels with casinos.

Hilton are also spending lots of dollars on their casino hotels, building up their non gambling family entertainment areas and have recently completed a major installation at the Los Vegas Hilton

AWP's

BRITS HAPPY

Early returns on the all cash payout machines recently introduced in the UK have got operators smiling as they ponder the prospect of increasing income considerably.

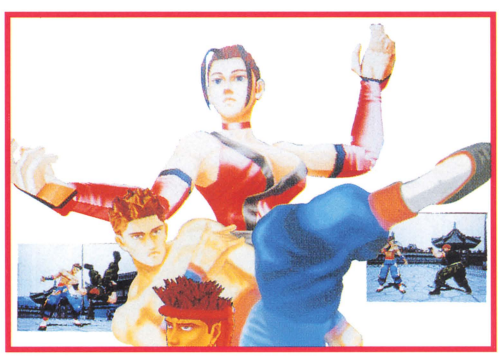
More conservative heads want to see if the better returns hold up before they get carried away, but even allowing for a significant drop off after the novelty wears off, the all cash system must be a lot better for operators than the previous system.

Video Games

TECMO FIGHTER LOOKS THE GOODS

Tecmo's CG 3D fighting game Dead or Alive was first seen at AOU Show as a prototype and some thought it too similar to Virtua Fighter to be viable, but the company have done a lot of work on the game since those early days and the game now released is shaping up as a real contender for top honours on what we hear it's earning in Japan and Hong Kong.

Dead or Alive not only looks great, but plays great too with some excellent combination and kill moves.



Countertops

MIDWAY READY

Bally Midway are reportedly ready to start shipping their new countertop bar game, the Touch Master which they showed at this years ACME.

Confidence in the product is high even though the countertop market is very keenly contested in the USA where established manufacturers like Merit Industries, have rock solid relations with their operators after many years of working with them.

Cranes

NEO MINI A GOER

Popular in Japan since first brought into the market, the SNK Neo Mini cranes are now being marketed internationally and proving they can do well anywhere.

The countertop units are stocked with clear capsules that enable players to see what's in them, they come in a variety of eye catching colours and have multiple claw configurations.

Beautifully engineered and able to be placed anywhere, the Neo Mini looks to be a real 'goer' for crane operators.

Laser Tag

LASER STORM LINK WITH NAMCO

Namco USA have come to an agreement with Laser Storm for the operation of their laser tag games in specific FEC's in the 500 strong Namco chain of American arcades and FEC's.

Fourteen locations are currently being assessed as possible development sites with both companies expecting to expand that initial list considerably.

The very successful Stargate themed game, introduced last year and proving very popular, will be the first laser tag installation for Namco when it opens in a Time Out mall location, in Cincinnati, later this year.

Industry

REMEMBER

Where you read it, cause come September, October we believe there will be a move by an absolutely huge computer company into the coin-op industry.

Can't tell you who at this point, or in what capacity, but these people do not do anything in a small way and moneywise they could buy a company like Sega for example, with their small change.

It appears their guru boss has sighted *windows* of opportunity in coin-op that he is finding hard to resist.

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World's Apart

United States
SMART SUMMER SUMMIT

Smart Industries are holding their first annual "Smart Summer Summit" as we go to print, a three day gathering in the Queen City of Charlotte, North Carolina, which will bring together a large number of the company's distributors and other industry folk.

The key events will be the Summit Business Meeting and the Summit Challenge Golf Tournament, but there's plenty else planned for what should be a fantastic weekend of fun, friendship, and a wee touch of business.

On receiving a much appreciated invite our editor was practising his golf swing .....until he found he couldn't change his departure date to Sao Paulo for the SALEX Show because of heavy traffic to the Olympics in Atlanta.

Australia
ASSOCIATIONS ON THE MOVE

Insurance of coin-op machines at a reasonable price has been almost impossible in Australia for many years, but two State operator associations, the Queensland and NSW AMOA's, have joined forces in addressing the matter and have succeeded in negotiating an excellent insurance facility for their members.

The package covers Fire & Peril, Business Interruption, Burglary, Money, Transit, Public and Product Liability.

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United Kingdom
INDUSTRY BRAVES MEAN WEATHER FOR CHARITY

BACTA, the big British industry associations annual golf tournament, the BACTA Charity Golf Classic, was held in late June at the Warwickshire" one of England's most picturesque courses, and despite extremely dirty weather of driving rain and strong winds that constantly buffeted contestants throughout the day, was once again a great success, raising £12,000 for kids charities.

AL's winning team, seated in front, from left, Michael Edwards, Peter Slattery, Ian Chuter and Tony Marten with Bell Fruit's, Keith Healey standing in centre and Roger Withers, Chairman BACTA Charitable Trust, standing at right

Over thirty teams from as many different industry companies, started and completed the course with the winner being Associated Leisure.

While all the UK's major companies support this event, each year a different company acts as principal sponsor and this year Bell Fruit Manufacturing Ltd filled that role admirably with their generous support being widely appreciated.

The golf day is only one of the BACTA Charitable Trust's fund raisers, they do a fantastic job for many charities, and the industry each year, and have raised hundreds of thousand pounds for worthy causes

There was apparently only one hiccup..... in a ruckus at the 2nd hole when the ATEI team's fourth player, who bore a remarkable resemblance to Nick Faldo, short circuited in the rain, and had to be replaced with a human Editor.

Malaysia
REDEMPTION GAMES MAKING THEIR PRESENCE FELT & PINBALLS ON THE UP

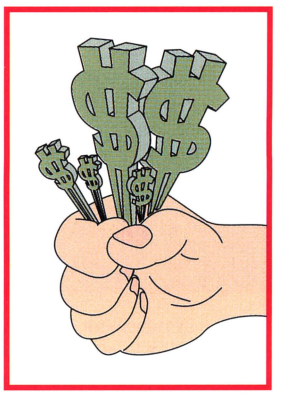
Takings on Redemption games are making some of the big dedicated video games look a bit sick in Malaysia as more operators turn to the ticket games to bolster income. In some areas of Kuala Lumpur, the good Redemption games are ticking up many more plays a day than the driving games, and though this may relate to the big number of drivers in operation, the revenue from Redemption games, particularly those requiring luck as well as skill, is exceptionally good on Malaysian standards. Malaysians love a gamble.

Pinballs are also continuing to lift in popularity where they are kept in good working condition, and though it's not thought that Pinball will boom, operators believe there is still a lot of room for expansion.

Hong Kong
CRACKDOWN ON VIDEO GAMES

Hong Kong's Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority have issued over 700 warnings to arcade owners for operating obscene, violent or gambling games in their establishments. Several of the worst offending arcades have been closed down for seven days on suspension, but none have been permanently closed.....yet.

REVENUE SLUMP SEEMS TO HAVE BOTTOMED OUT - 1997 LOOKING GOOD



It seems the slump in revenue that has plagued the industry in many countries for some months has at last bottomed out in most regions, and the good part about that as we head into a string of big Trade Shows is that the way is now open for things to start getting better.

While all sectors of coin-op games have suffered with the exception of Kiddie Rides and possibly Pool Tables/Darts, none have had as long, or as bad a run as Pinballs, they were first in to the downturn and except for isolated pockets around the world like South America and parts of Asia where the silver ball is gaining favour, they look like being last out, almost certainly in the US anyway, where those who should have a fair idea, are tipping Pinball won't come back till the second half of 1997.

Video games have generally "hung in" with their slump being nowhere near as bad as that in the early 80's which wiped many operators right out, and with many smaller companies now moving into CG games, and Sega and Namco ready to move onto another level, it's a pretty safe bet that there's going to be plenty of quality games for operators to utilise.

And also in video, we can expect to see some new game developers entering the coin-op market, mainly from countries outside of Japan. Many consumer game developers based in the USA and Europe now realise the benefits a coin-op version can have in respect to promoting good sales of the consumer game.

We already have Acclaim in the market, and now that they have had that little bit of necessary experience with coin-op, we can only see them producing better and better games. Other types of newcomer to video like ICE Inc will also make it interesting, and then there's the newly combined might of Midway and Atari, a game development powerhouse which is capable of absolutely anything.

From Japan we keep hearing that both Sony and Panasonic want to get into making games for their consumer systems to reap the real rewards the consumer market offer. Both these companies would be well aware of the advantages in producing coin-op versions, once they make the move.

So though video game revenue is down a bit in most places, it's hard to see it dropping any further and on the positive side of things, video games have probably never been in a better position to take advantage of any upswing.

Music is another sector that has 'hung in' pretty well with some markets holding up well and others being down a bit, but music never stays down for long and this sector has no great worries.

Redemption games are in a strange situation, though depressed in the USA, their traditional top market, many other countries like Spain, Malaysia, States of the Middle East, Brasil and Argentina, to name a few, are really starting to get into redemption and the companies that have worked to get a position in these markets are set to gain the benefits.

The other thing about redemption games is that a lot of the problems are in the way the games are operated, even in the USA where most operators should be well aware of the "do's" and "do not's" of redemption. Those who complain of heavy falls in redemption game revenue should take heed of the fact that you rarely hear *good redemption operators* complaining too much, they find where the falls are, why they are there.....and in most cases, do something to fix the problem.

For a prediction on the future we sought the help of our Virtua CG 3D Crystal Ball, but when it wouldn't start up we fell back on human observations and for what it's worth, we believe that by the middle of next year we'll all be laughing, manufacturers, distributors, operators, players and magazine editors.

And as long as no one gets too greedy, the whole industry should be looking at a few really good years.

AUSTRALASIA'S ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL AMUSEMENT EXPO 1996
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The Amusement Machine Operators' Association of Queensland (AMOAQ) would like to invite everyone to dine with the Bengal tigers at "Dreamworld", one of Australia's most popular theme parks. The AMOAQ have booked this great venue for the opening function of their 1996 Amusement Expo, and the theme park will be open for the exclusive use of expo delegates.

It will be a welcome party to beat all as you will be invited to see Dreamworld's Tiger Island. It's a specially designed habitat where tigers and their handlers interact peacefully and it offers a truly unique experience. A picturesque backdrop of bamboo and tropical gardens provide the ideal setting for the six "gentle giants", as you mingle at the foot of the Indian Temple. Enjoy cocktails and savouries as you watch the tigers and their handlers play, swim and wrestle together only metres away - an unforgettable experience.

After leaving the tigers the action begins with a variety of rides and attractions the equal of any in the Southern Hemisphere, including the very, very wild "Wipeout" ride. For those who wish to keep their feet on the ground, there will be music, drinks and plenty of socialising.

Once you have your fill of the rides, you can join the rest of the guests for dinner and the street party. And this is just the introduction to Australia's International Amusement Expo.

Those of you who have attended the annual trade show put on by the AMOAQ before will know what an enjoyable event it is. For those of you who haven't, the Queensland show is like no other we know of. While there are certainly bigger expositions on the international trade show circuit, few have the geographic and social appeal of this event.

It's a professionally run event, held in one of the world's most popular destinations, and where some good business is done, but the AMOAQ know that the secret of success really comes with good opportunities to meet other industry people.

Along with the three-day trade show, there are many other events where you can catch up with colleagues and make new contacts. These include the Annual Dinner and Awards night at the Marriot Hotel Ballroom, and end of conference "bash" at another Gold Coast tourist attraction, plus the annual tennis and golf tournaments where fun and friendly rivalry abounds.

The biggest attraction of this event however, is it's location: Queensland's Gold Coast. A more beautiful stretch of beaches you will not find.

So make your bookings to visit Australia for this fantastic event and have a bit of the thing that this industry's all about: FUN!

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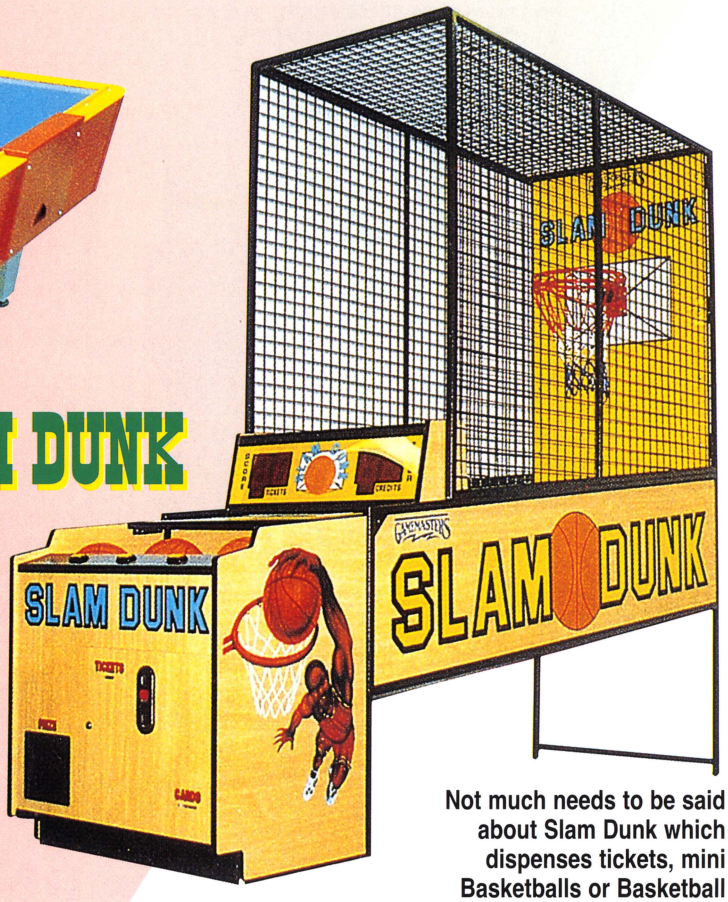

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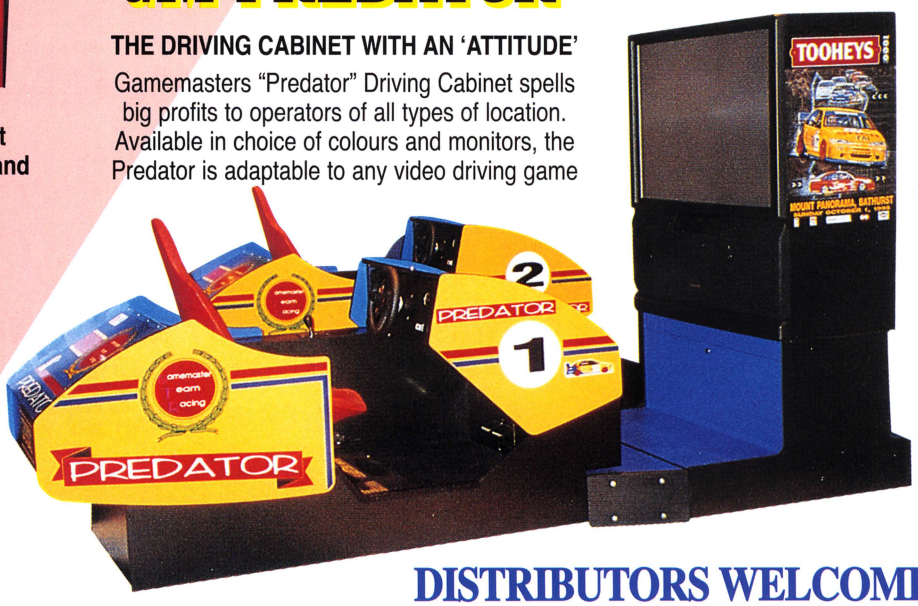

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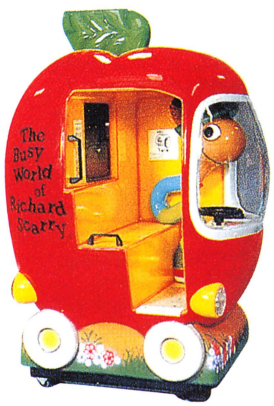
Kidstuff '96

The lucrative market for "Kidstuff" is getting stronger and stronger, Kiddie Rides, Kids games, Soft Play and Edutainment are all about getting the adults of this world to spend money on the little guys and with the equipment that's available today.....that's not hard.

In the following pages we take a look at just some of the latest & best products and the ways astute operators are working the equipment to their financial advantage



When you've raised a family into their twenties and thirties it's not hard to lose track of the costs involved in rearing children, this writer certainly had, until fate dealt a hand that saw us bringing up a two year old male, bundle of dynamite.

That was two and a half years ago and Jarrod is now almost five, he's into Power Rangers, Transformers, trains, and.....*Kiddie Rides, Soft Play, Kid's Redemption games, Kid's Sports games and of course, Sega home video games.*

If you let him, he'll also plop the body in the seat of a Daytona or Ace Driver and expect Pop to hit it with a couple of bucks, even though his feet hover about two foot away from the accelerator.

I haven't proved it yet, but I'm sure if you put a coloured garbage can with a coin slot in it in front of him, he would want to pump dollars into that too.

Like most 4 or 5 year olds, "game" and "play" are two of the most important words in this little blokes vocabulary, and he related coin slot to playing a game very early in life, so now, anything that just might be a game, or has a coin slot, draws him like a magnet.

Not having been through this with my own kids I thought that by taking him to Trade Shows when he was only a bit over two and letting him loose on all the goodies that were on display I had created a monster, that he was the only kid on the planet under three who was into coin-op, but how wrong can you get.

As we've talked to the much younger parents of his mates from Pre School, we find that all the kids are very much the same, and knowing what Jarrods habits have cost me, (let alone his Nan, dad and aunties, etc) it's easy to see why smart operators are putting at least some of their resources into the provision of kid's games and why good FEC's have large areas filled with Kidstuff.

Simply put, they'd be fools if they didn't, the kids market is one of the strongest and most consistent sectors in this industry and it can only get better as people get more and more disposable income.

In many parts of Asia, South East Asia, the Middle East and South America where family life is the most important thing of all, the kids sector is the most lucrative of all, and it's not unusual to see up to 60% - 70% odd of space in an FEC being filled with Kiddie Rides, Soft Play, Kids games and Party rooms

Down at the local Tilt arcade where I take our little guy every now and again, I've watched others like me pour money into Kids games to amuse their little ones, and I've watched how the kids work their minders over.

They've made an art form of it, there's no way a parent or minder with any semblance of conscience or love, for the yodelling monster that's looking up at them, pleading, and making them look like the original Scrooge when they say "No rides today", can get out of the arcades or FEC's without spending heaps.

Many try, but in 99% of cases, they're kidding themselves, the end result is almost inevitable, the kid is going to win, he knows it, and the parents know it, so it's only a matter of minutes before they capitulate and go for the wallet or purse.

And that means 'bucks', the new breed of interactive rides, and genuine Kid sized games is doubling and tripling what was the 'normal spend' by parents, who are not only paying the higher price of play that is operable in most parts, but are letting the Kids have more rides or games each visit.

Of course while there's losers, in this case, the parents or minder, there's got to be winners..... and the operators who have installed the Kiddie Rides, Kiddies games, or Soft Play unit, and who are still going to be taking good money out of these pieces of equipment for many years..... are the big winners.

And the more I think about all this, the more I wonder why I'm encouraging you operator guys to get into this racket, 'cause the way our little bloke is going, a lot of that money is going to come out of my pocket.

Kidstuff is good stuff, don't worry about that, but there is a few misconceptions going around about Kids facilities that need to be mentioned. An operator told us just the other day when we were talking about Kidstuff that there was, *"no future in it mate, look how Discovery Zone has gone down the tube"*

I don't know how many operators think like that, but guys you're way off beam. Everyone knows that Discovery Zone was a flawed concept and without being too harsh on them, it was poorly conceived and poorly managed, basically a case of people having a lot of money to play with, but not the common sense to read the "How to Play" card.

The earning power of Kidstuff had nothing at all to do with Discovery Zones demise.

So don't let any of that garbage deter you, and in most cases, the price of equipment should not be a deterrent either, if the quality stuff is purchased. It has to be looked at differently to video game purchases for example, but that is not a problem when ten years of profitable operation is not at all unusual.

If you are still chasing the dream of getting rich quick out of coin-op, better you forget kidstuff, but if you've realised that while a lot of people end up quite wealthy over time, and only the very, very few make the big bucks quick, kidstuff is something you should put a lot of thought and a bit of cash into.

It's one of the surer bets in this industry.

In the ensuing pages we write of just some of the many, good kidstuff products that are available.

CBI COVER - INDUSTRIAS FALGAS sa

Featured on this months CBI cover is the well known Spanish manufacturer of quality Kiddie Rides, ***Industrias Falgas sa***, who have been manufacturing Kiddie Rides since 1961, making them one of the oldest KR manufacturing company's in the world.

The company specialise in coin-op carousels and fun, rides of long standing, popular themes like cars, trucks, animals, planes, etc, and their latest release, *Taxi Baby*, which is a basic car ride with a cute, fun theme, is one of their very best, setting levels of income in Europe that have operators ecstatic.

Taxi Baby is the first ride of Falgas's new production policy in which they intend producing a new novelty ride every two or three months, but if all their new rides have the success of this one, that policy may have to be changed as the company would be at full capacity filling orders.

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Kidstuff '96

Some Operators Don't Need to be Told the Value of Kidstuff

Ray makes a point of visiting at least two major Trade Shows a year where he looks at every item on display in the light of how and if, it can help his business increase revenue.

Getting the right mix in an operation is seen by many as the key to making real money out of operating coin-op games, we know one, very much on the ball guy, who reckons he's got the ideal mix, and kidstuff is a major part of it.

Meet Ray, a now wealthy, 43 year old operator, who basically stumbled into Kiddie Rides by accident, but has gone from there to operating a wide range of kidstuff, as well as a heap of big dedicated games in pubs, etc. Ray uses Kiddie Rides and kid's games as his "Bread and Butter" earners, and has got himself into a position where the kidstuff part of his operation, which represents about 35% of what he has invested in the industry, pays all his running expenses.....*week in, week out, all his everyday costs are covered by the kidstuff.*

The other 65% of his capital is tied up in mainly big dedicated machines that he operates in pubs, and the income from them he splits basically in half, with half going towards the purchase of new equipment, and the other half paying for the overseas holiday, the new Benz and the extension on the house, etc.

In short, because he has all running expenses covered with the constant income from the kidstuff, he is basically having the time of his life with the big games and taking something like 20% of gross earnings in profit, *after tax.*

Now we'll be the first to admit that Ray is very astute, has really worked at becoming successful, and has a first class operation, it's a big operation and he has some top locations, but the way he tells it, things would not be the way they are, if he hadn't got into KR's about 5 years ago.

"I came into some unexpected money about five years ago" he told us *"my operation was going all right, but basically staying at the same level where it was providing a pretty good income, but not much else. I looked at other businesses, thinking I'd get out of coin-op, but it's only when you look at alternatives, that the coin-op industry looks really good, so I decided to stay and expand"*

"An operation I bought for $55,000 had in it 16 pretty old Kiddie Rides, and I was all set to off load them to the first goose I could find, when I noticed that a couple of them were earning pretty good money. It surprised me as I thought they were junk. But when you see a KR that must have been 10 or 15 years old, earning $60 a week on 40 cent play, you can't help but become interested"

"So I had a bit of a fiddle with a few of the other rides, I checked the mechanics, put new coin mechs in them, got them repainted and relocated them on new sites. An operator mate of mine thought I'd lost my marbles, but I was soon buying new rides, completely hooked on the consistency of KR earnings"

"From that point on, I haven't looked back, I've expanded on KR's with some great kids games which are incredibly easy to site, even in top line arcades, as most arcade operators are chasing the games that can earn the big money, and because I only take a couple of hundred bucks out the door each collect, they're not running to buy their own kid's games.

"What they miss is that in some cases I've been taking that couple of hundred out their door and a lot of other doors, for 2 and 3 years, and I rarely have to change a game because of income drop. Mostly I just change games in locations when I bring them back to the workshop periodically to freshen them up a bit for another year or so of work"

"Because I'm only dealing in hundreds with locations that take many thousands of dollars a week, I know a few arcade operators who think I'm a battler that's struggling along with a few kids games, and I let them think it, the only thing that's really worried me since I got on to this, is that every other operator on the planet would see what was happening and do the same, but since I've realised that's not going to happen while ever the "quick, big money mentality" is there, I've been laughing..... yeh, I'll say it.....all the way to the bank"

We asked Ray what his best pieces were and his response was *"If you put them in the right locations and work them right, they're nearly all good, but I've got a real soft spot for car rides as it was car rides that woke me up to this, and I've done real good out of them since. I can only talk of my operation, but I reckon over 90% of our kids business comes from little boys, maybe that means we are missing out on heaps from the little girls, but generally speaking it's the boys that play our games and ride our KR's. One real exception to that are the mini carousels which the girls go for.*

"I get a kick out of watching little kids and their parents or minders in malls when the kids sight a KR ..... girls are mostly a bit indifferent, they seem to be able to take it or leave it, but the boys 'home in' on a ride like missiles, they're sitting up there waiting for the coin to be put in, before their Mum knows what's happened, and Mum invariably realises she has no option but to cop it on the chin and drop the coin"

"God Bless the little guys, I love 'em"

Kidstuff '96

Parties

Although we have covered birthday parties in much greater detail in past issues of Cash Box International, we couldn't put "Kidstuff '96" together without at least mentioning this very lucrative activity.

Most FEC's with a good party program will tell you that at least 30% of their revenue is generated directly from birthday parties - and this is just the start. There's also a lot of *indirect* income generated by all the extra traffic flowing through your centre.

Cluey operators see parties as a type of "promotion" because they bring a lot of new people into an FEC. Every time you book a party, you have the opportunity to sell your facility to new customers. If the kids have a great time, you can bet that they will be bugging mum and dad to come back again and again.

For this reason you have to look at your party packages as a marketing tool and offer value for money. Sure, you have to make a nice profit on the event, but don't be too greedy.

Party packages have to have a high *perceived value* and this means putting in a decent amount of activities at a reasonable price. This is easier than it sounds because there is often a huge difference in the perceived value of an activity and its actual cost to you.

For example, if you normally charge $5 for an hour in your soft play area, the perceived value to parents is $5. BUT, it really costs you very little to add this activity to your party package. Parents will definitely add up the normal retail costs of all the activities you are offering in your package, and they won't be satisfied unless they are getting a good discount. After all, they will usually be paying for around 10 kids to come to your centre.

Keeping parents satisfied is one thing, but you won't get that all-important repeat visitation unless you please the kids as well. The key to this is good staff.

Party monitors can mean the difference between an OK party and an absolutely fantastic one. They have to be enthusiastic to get the children excited about the party. The birthday boy or girl has to be made to feel extra special (as they would if their parents were giving them the party at home) and no child should feel left out of the activities.

It's also important to make sure the kids don't become bored, so this means changing the activities around regularly.

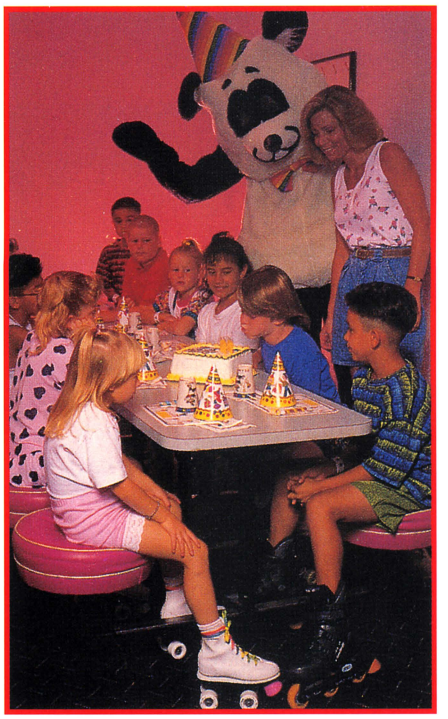
Little extra touches are always appreciated by children and adults alike. Themed party rooms (like the one pictured left) are always popular, as are visits by centre mascots and other dressed up characters (as pictured above). Young children really enjoy fantasy and role playing games so these types of things usually work very well.

You don't have to spend a lot of money to create a themed party, especially if you stay away from licensed characters. Other good ideas include providing costumes for fancy dress parties and creating themed "adventures" around the equipment in your FEC. This helps to tie all the activities together and children love to get involved in a good storyline.

Small extras that really please parents can include things like providing invitations, party hats, lolly bags and a special gift for the birthday child. These types of things don't cost much but they mean a lot.

Parents will feel that you have given their child the sort of personal party they would have held at home. And at the same time, you have saved them all the time and effort of shopping, cooking, organising and cleaning up.

While children will ask to be taken back to your FEC, parents can help to drum up extra business by word of mouth. If they tell other parents about your party package, what a great time their child had, and what good value it was, you can be sure you'll get more bookings.



For operators, children's birthday parties are an excellent and very steady source of income. Once booked, you know those customers will be coming to your centre rain, hail or shine. If you have the kiddie equipment already, you're crazy if your are not already hosting birthday parties!

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Kidstuff '96

Kiddie Rides

Despite the introduction of some excellent kids games and the success of well managed soft play installations, Kiddy Rides are still the backbone of the kidstuff sector and that doesn't look like changing.

But some operators are passing up KR's in the belief that only shopping malls are good locations and with most of them having contracted suppliers, there are no locations available for rides.

But nothing is locked in concrete in the KR industry, the limits are only what the operator sets as limits, the malls may be taken in most areas, but there are still great opportunities out there for the operator who can broaden his perspective, see the opportunities available, and then has the guts to grab the chance before it passes him by.

Kiddies are a pretty hotly sought after customer these days and so they should be.

They have no concept of budgeting and therefore all income is disposable to them. They have little interest in self discipline and therefore, if something catches their attention they want it.....there and then. Small Kids have little time for social etiquette so though the methods they employ to get what they want may be somewhat excessive and potentially embarrassing for parents, they're usually successful.

When it comes to customers, kiddies are just about as good as it gets.

However it's parents that make the final decision about which cashbox will get their bucks, no matter how persistent the pleas, or piercing, the screams. And so, when it comes to Kiddie Rides, manufacturers are on the right track if the ride also appeals to parents.

Most manufacturers have got the parent angle covered in one way or another. It would seem that receiving something tangible at the end of the ride is an approach that is proving to be parentally approved. The capsule dispenser is becoming an increasingly common attachment to kiddie rides. The photo ride is another idea which parents like, and one that is bound to continue to be popular, and rides which seat two kids instead of one is another way to give parents more value for money.

Parents are also more inclined to spend their money on something which can be considered educational. The increased control and simulation available in Kiddies Rides may well translate into more parents being willing to feed the cashbox as the kids will be getting practice in motor skills and not just mindlessly bouncing up and down whilst vibrating. The argument goes that in a world where children appear to be maturing much earlier, they're naturally going to expect more and more razzamatazz for their coin.

Carousel Int'l's capsule dispensing Dolphin ride adds another dimension to KR's

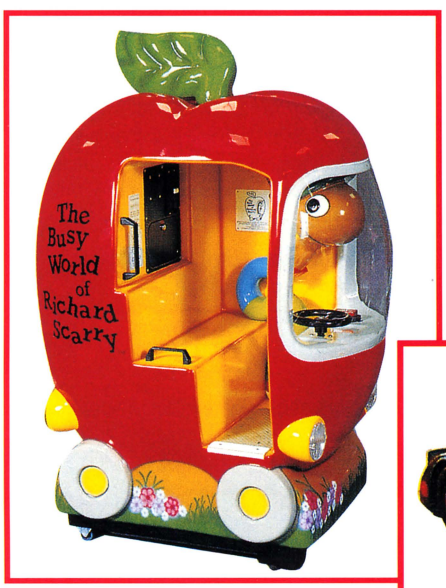
Carousel International Corp. of the USA seem to be covering just about all the angles with their latest releases. Their 'Friendly Dolphin' two-seater ride is set to cash in on the summertime "Flipper" fever generated by the movie whilst maintaining its appeal afterwards as a straight-down-the-line-generic-dolphin. The attached vendor dispenses prismatic Flipper stickers and a friendly underwater voice gives enviro-friendly messages to kids while they ride. When the "Flipper" fever goes off the boil, the ride can dispense anything at all that fits in a capsule.

Carousel's "Speedster II" is targeting the kid who prefers the roar of the engine to the calm of the ocean. As the rider cruises through the video screen countryside, oil slicks, cows that moo and chickens that chirp will all be making the ride more of an experience.

Carousel believe the ride is that much of a sure thing that operators can set the price per play at 2 - 2.5 times the price of other kiddie rides and the number of kids willing to get in the driver's seat will outstrip even the best licensed games. And whatsmore the ride is built to last with a steel fabricated chassis and gel-coated fibreglass body.

An added bonus with this one is in the graphics which show a sign in a farm village, which can be customised to show any retailer's name. The child ends the ride by parking in front of the store.

The argument about licensed character rides versus generic rides is still alive and well, and looks like staying that way. Most operators have both licensed character rides and generic rides that are doing good business, and like most things coin-op it probably comes down to the location.



Jolly Rogers licensed "Apple Car" and one of Falgas's generic cars. Vastly different in concept, both have their admirers in the operator ranks, and the little guys will play either, with no concern for any argument there may be about licensed character or generic rides.

EMT Play Island: A magic attraction for children.

Now your EMT Kiddie Rides can be placed on the EMT Play Island for maximum profit in shopping centre locations. The basic Play Island holds up to eight Kiddie Rides and can be extended by adding further elements. Decoration panels are ideal for individual advertisement of the operator or location owner.

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Kidstuff '96

Kiddie Rides

Parents appear to be very comfortable with the licensed characters having probably read their children countless stories about them at one time or the other or in some cases, grown up with the characters themselves, and in this respect licensed rides appear to have an edge.

Jolly Roger from the UK are a company that are doing good business out of licensed rides and their 'Lowly Worm', or 'Apple Car' ride, which won the company a prestigious award at IAAPA, is one of the best selling rides the company has produced.

"The Busy World of Richard Scarry", which the "Lowly Worm" comes from, is a wholesome educational book and animated T.V series that is loved by parents and kids in many countries. It's been around for a long time and is reaching new heights in popularity. In that sense it's a sure, long term bet for operators.

In fact all the characters recently secured by Jolly Roger fall into similar categories. Popeye, Woody Woodpecker, Garfield, The Pink Panther, My Little Pony and characters from the Mr Men series are all tried and true kiddie winners, with Mr Blobby perhaps being the only character whose appeal has not been cemented outside of the United Kingdom.

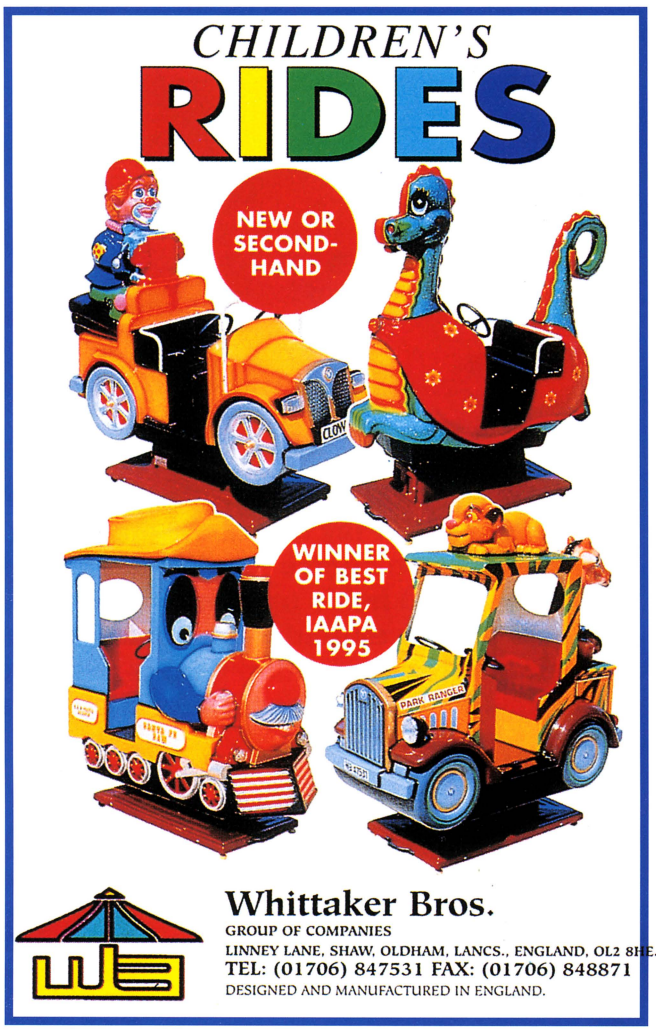
The managing director of Jolly Roger, Roger Newborough believes chain stores are now demanding the higher quality licensed rides not only because they generate a higher income than regular rides, but also because they can feature in the stores in support of the merchandise on sale.

Jolly Roger promote the move towards licensed characters as a 'new era of profit,' and are very confident and comfortable with the concept of licensed character rides, but other manufacturers are just as comfortable with generic themes.

Falgas Rides from Spain have been making Kiddie Rides very successfully since 1961 and though their views on licensed and interactive rides differ from a lot of other KR manufacturers, there's an old argument that says you should never argue with success.

Above: German manufacturer EMT "kicked a goal" when they secured the Disney license, and have built some quality rides including these and a great Mickey Mouse car

CHILDREN'S
RIDES



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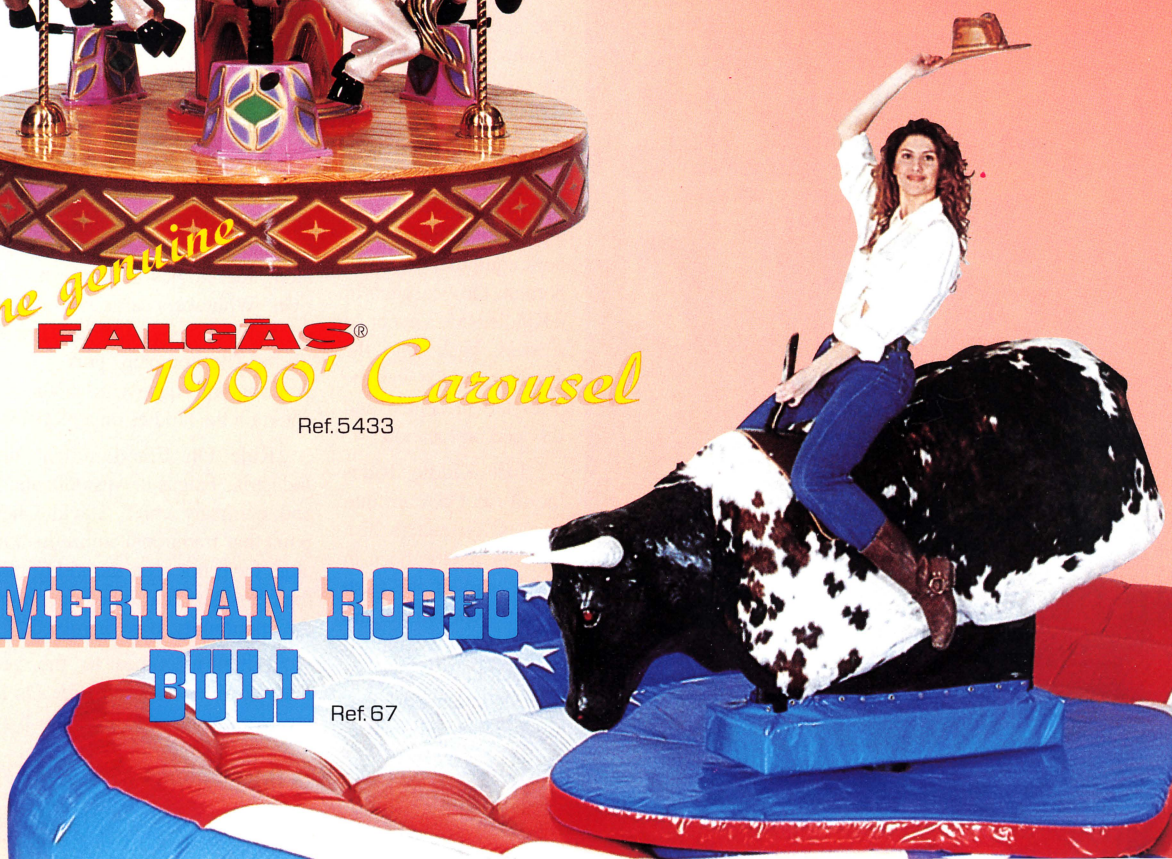

AMERICAN RODEO BULL

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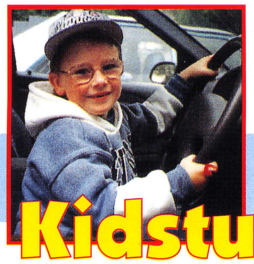


Kidstuff '96

Kiddie Rides

Top: Amutec's Photo Rides are taking extraordinary money in high volume locations

Falgas believe that both licensed characters and interactivity, increase the cost of the rides to operators, but are generally not much more profitable. Falgas prefer to stick with generic themes, as the names of some of their rides suggest - Jeep, Patrol Car, Motor Police etcetera.

The company has an excellent range of carousels, so good that several other companies have copied them, but that is one of the biggest problems with generic themes and Falgas have learned to live with it.

Taxi-Baby is the latest ride Falgas have released and the company claims the bright yellow two-seater already holds a very high position in the market when it comes to making money.

So Falgas have passed on licensed characters at this stage, content to make rides that are original, reliable, safe, and which operators know can make money for many years.

Kiddy Rides Australia believe that safety, quality finish and low maintenance are the top priorities to look for in a ride. They also show a reluctance to give much importance to licensed characters. Colin Duncan from Kiddy Rides Australia puts forward the view that *"as far as the operator is concerned (licensed rides) are really just door openers into high profile locations."*

But despite having a preference for 'well designed generic games that never date' the next ride to be made by the company will be themed on Humphrey B. Bear, a long loved character on children's T.V in Australia. Kid riders will sit beside Humphrey in car, truck and train rides.

Kiddy Rides Australia put the emphasis on having a broad range of styles in their rides and doing regular changes.

The company feels that interactive elements in rides will not progress too far due to the limited skills of little kids.

Overall theirs is a more back-to-basics attitude which while admitting ride selection and new equipment are important, throws much of a Kiddie Ride's eventual success, back onto the operator and the way the rides are presented and serviced on location

Just Kiddie Rides Inc of the USA are into licensed characters in a big way having been in at the start of the push into this type of ride, and they have a most impressive stable of American animated 'legends' featured in their products.

The Flintstones, The Jetsons, Tom and Jerry and Batman are just about as familiar to most children as their immediate families and the company has now added the Peanuts license that puts Snoopy in the passenger seat of a cool Fire engine and an Ice Cream truck. Just Kiddie Rides Inc believe there's a huge potential in licensed kiddy rides and have set the pace in securing a range of very popular characters.

Zamperla Inc. took out first place in the exhibitor category at IAAPA. Their rides have an emphasis on interactivity and realistic operating controls. They are the company that produce the Super Shovel which gave kiddies new levels of control for their money.

Kiddie Rides U.S.A's have a mix of licensed and generic rides with their most recent release being the Tonka Truck ride which has already shown that it can bring in big revenue. The company chose the Tonka Truck license because Tonka toys have been 'delighting children for over fifty years' and belief in the *'Every Kid Loves a Tonka'* credo.

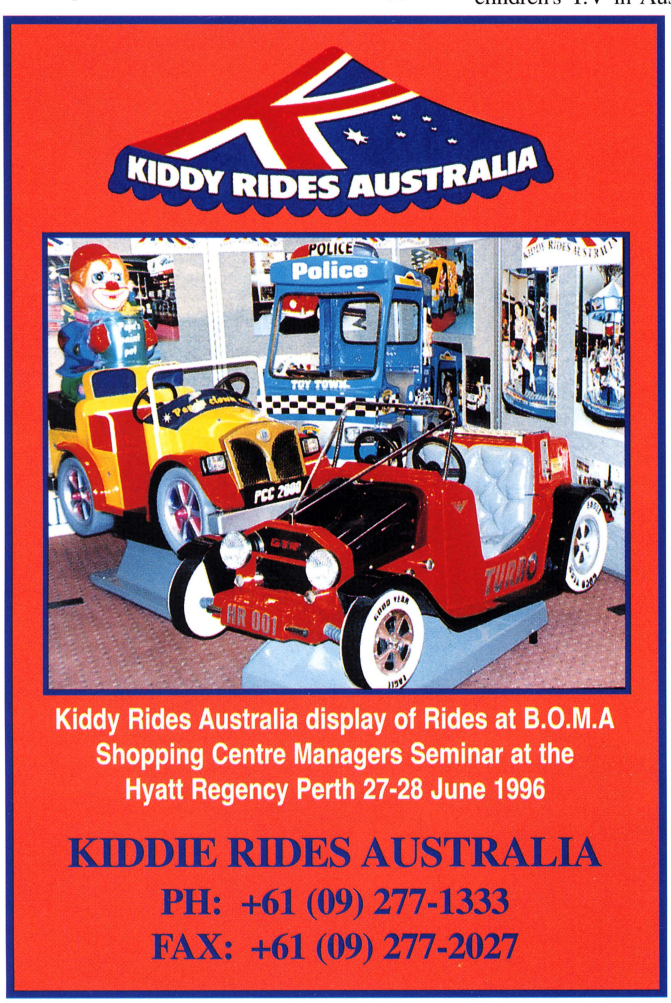
Amutec's Photo Ride incorporates a concept that is proving very popular. Happy snaps of riding tikes have been taken in twenty different countries and within the next twelve months there will be 5 million more photos taken.

Amutec believe the ride brings in profits 3 - 4 times those of a conventional ride at the same location. The ride these days can give black and white or colour prints, postcards or stickers and they can be over-printed with advertising and only take 30 seconds to vend on out. Amutec, understandably, have done very well with this ride and now they are promising interesting happenings in 1997. The kiddy ride world will be watching.

Whittaker Bros. have celebrated their 50th year with an exceptionally successful year in exporting. They are going very well with their no-mucking-about figures and animals sitting alongside kiddies in large single or two seater rides. Whittakers came first and second in coin op kiddy rides at the last International Park Show. The company puts a big emphasis on working with quality distributors as they try to entertain the kiddies on a global scale.

Ride On Entertainment distributes for Industrias Falgas in Australia and New Zealand and company chief, David Chell makes the point that 'traditional amusement machine operators have not seen the kiddy ride business as their business and other operators have seized the opportunity to get involved.'

When it comes to the generic versus licensed rides question Ride On Entertainment are also reluctant to give the hypeful licensed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rides the big thumbs up. They believe that licensed rides are a more risky area to get into, return-on-investment-wise, and that many generic rides will out perform a mediocre licensed ride.

At operator level licensed rides are usually much more expensive to purchase and that is obviously a bit of a hurdle when your cars, trucks, etc, consistently produce the goods.

Sesame Amusements are a small but long standing Australian company currently doing good business with the gift dispensing concept. It is not surprising that they are finding the angle to be successful since it allows operators to double the price of a ride and then attract plenty of parents out there willing to go the extra dollar, and walk away with that tangible something in return. Sesame's rides have colourful generic animals on a small spinning stage with their most recognisable trait being the gift dispenser as a major attraction.

EMT Kiddie Rides have always prided themselves on the fact that they are different. They have always put the emphasis on professionalism and high quality rides. Their rides are easily recognisable as sleek, well detailed, impressive looking machines, well liked by operators because they take quite a beating without showing wear. Not only are EMT known as the Mercedes Benz of Kiddy Rides they make the Mercedes Benz of Kiddy Rides as well as the Porsche and the Ferrari.

As well as many different motor vehicles EMT have a big range of animal rides, both generic and licensed. Then there's their interactive rides which allow children to feel the power of the engine responding to the gas pedal and a helicopter with buttons causing radio chatter and 'devastating' machine gun fire. In the licensing stakes EMT have several big names with Disney being a real prize, as anyone on this globe would agree, Mickey Mouse is a pretty handy rodent to have on your side if you are interested in making money.

EMT's latest development is the EMT Play Island. It's a pretty neat idea for a location with big traffic flow. You can put up to eight EMT Kiddy Rides on a slightly raised platform and create a real Kiddy Ride Event that any fun-respecting child is not going to even consider passing by.

We don't profess to know what are the best rides for operators to buy out of licensed character, generic theme, interactive, non interactive, educational, straight fun, capsule dispensing or photo taking, the fact that there is an ongoing argument over type of ride indicates to us that all must be capable of giving a good return on investment, as if there was a clear cut "best", there wouldn't be any argument.

Like most things coin-op, it's probably more a matter of selecting what's best suited for your budget and your locations

For operators, Kiddy Rides are a long term investment. A good ride, well maintained, can last for many years. In the coin-op industry there is always talk of what's new and what revolutionary developments are around the corner. It's the same in this one but with kiddy rides the formula for a successful ride is much less likely to change than in other coin-op markets. Kids needs don't change much from generation to generation.

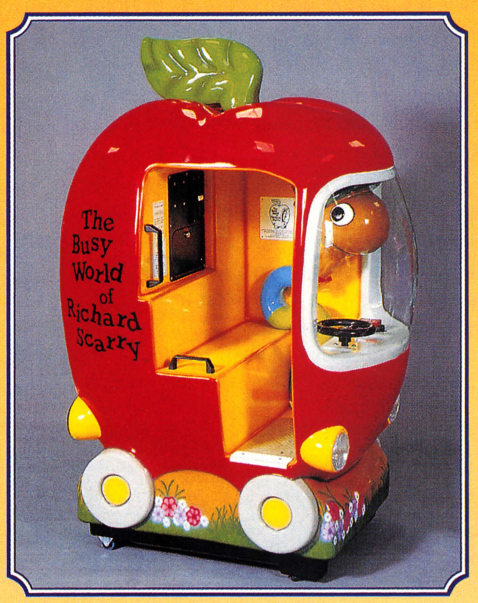
They know what they want and as any parent will vouch, it can sometimes be very difficult to convince them otherwise. Kids needs in the fun department will always be simple. That's why carousels are still a good money maker after, what, a couple of hundred years?

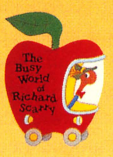
So development in KR's is more likely to be in greater durability and safety of the rides, rather than any brilliant hi tech break through, though you never know what's round the corner in this industry.

On KR locations, all agree that the malls and supermarkets of the world are the prime Kiddy Ride areas, but FEC's, arcades, cinemas, bowling alleys and other indoor entertainment facilities are improving rapidly as KR locations in this age of family entertainment and this trend appears likely to continue.

Nothing is locked in concrete in the KR industry, the limits are only what the operator sets as limits, the malls may be taken in most areas, but there are still great opportunities out there for the operator who can broaden his perspective, see the opportunities available, and then has the guts to grab the chance before it passes him by.

Jolly Roger





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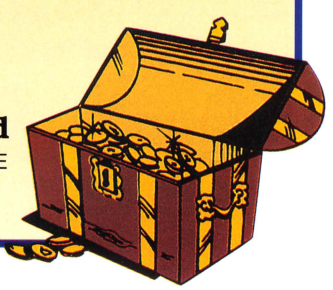

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Kidstuff '96

Soft Play

You would think that the image of soft modular play equipment would have suffered a bit since its biggest operator went bust. I am talking, of course, about Discovery Zone, the U.S. chain of soft play centres that lead the way in expanding the concept all over America.

Despite Discovery Zone's spectacular failure (spectacular only because for a while there they seemed such a success, with something like 350 locations), the demand for soft play equipment continues to grow. Manufacturers reported a decline in sales when news of Discovery Zone's difficulties first became known, but the slow down didn't last too long.

Problems with the company's concept were pin-pointed by many in the industry long before they declared Chapter 11, and independent operators always felt that they were more in tune with market trends than the big corporation.

Basically, Discovery Zone had some fantastic soft play equipment but it didn't have a complete concept to encourage repeat visits. At first, when the colourful mazes of plastic tubes, nets and slides were new to the market, they drew people in droves purely on their novelty value. Unfortunately, like all aspects of the amusement industry, the novelty soon wore off. Kids developed a "been there, done that" attitude and parents got sick of going to a place where there was nothing for them to do.

Discovery Zone's demise provides a lesson to all operators and would-be operators of soft modular play equipment. It's also given them the freedom to be innovative in the way they operate their centres.

There are two types of location which have proved to be fairly successful with soft play equipment: the FEC and the children's entertainment/educational centre. Both these concepts have much more than just a soft modular playground (which is where DZ went wrong).

FEC's have turned out to be a much more stable market than free-standing installations, and the reason is that FEC's have a lot more to offer visitors. There's no doubt that kids love soft modular playgrounds, but they will still become bored if this is all that it is on offer.

The new-style children's entertainment centres also have many more activities than just the soft playground. Successful centres offer children a program of "development" classes to improve their basic physical, cognitive and social skills. While not all these classes involve the soft play area, it is surprising how many activities can be developed around the equipment if you use your imagination.

Successful operators consider the soft playgrounds with all their wonderful slides, ball pools and crawl tubes as the "hardware", with the "software" being a good play program. Besides being used for general play, the equipment can become the scene for any number of play acting games, as well as treasure hunts and other games and competitions.

Casual "pay for play" is just not enough. While there will always be children who drop in just to have a run around the equipment, you won't get them to come back again and again if you don't offer something more.

To really be successful you have to please two groups of people: the kids and their parents. The components of play are learning and discovery, but at the same time, having fun. Soft play keeps both parties happy - as long as the child really is learning and having fun.

Neither will happen if the experience is the same every time the child visits your centre. Not only do you need a good play program, but the activities need to be constantly changing and developing. Repeat visits will only happen if the experience stays fresh.

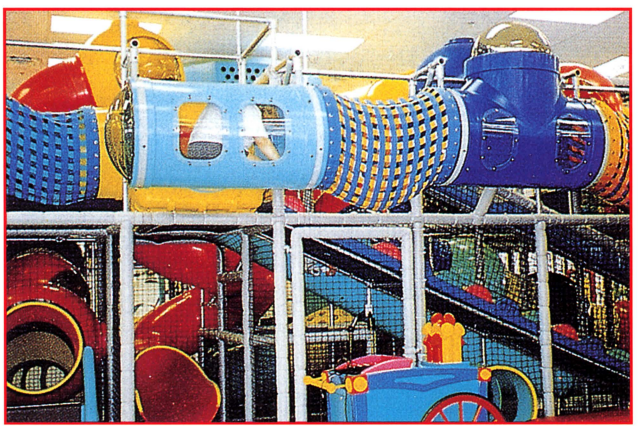
You also have to make sure that parents enjoy their time in you facility. Let them get involved in the action if they want to, as most active parents like to participate in their child's play time. Make sure the spaces are not too small or awkward for an adult to climb through. Also, if the maze is more open, it will be easier for those parents who only want to find their child in the maze. A good way of keeping the playground open visually is to break up the solid plastics with webbed floors and tunnels.

Just as an aside, some soft play centres have been supplementing their income by turning their equipment into a laser tag maze at night when there are few children about. This seems to work quite well and is an idea definitely worth considering.

For those parents who don't want to get on their hands and knees to crawl through plastic tubes, you have to provide a comfortable area from which they can watch their child. Ensure it's close by the play area so they can reach their child if they have to, and it's profitable to provide comfortable seating and a food service.

If you go into a successful children's entertainment centre you will notice that a group of mothers usually visit the venue together. While their kids are off playing, the parents will sit, have a coffee and chat amongst themselves.

When it comes to buying soft play equipment, operators now have more choices than ever before. There are many manufacturers of quality equipment and most have standard playground designs which can be purchased, while all are happy to build a customised system especially for your centre.



There are many excellent manufacturers of soft modular play equipment and they are developing new features all the time. But no matter how good the equipment, you still need a play program to get repeat visits.

PLAYTEC: Fun and games for Australasia

Playtec are an Australian owned company that are one of the leading manufacturers of Soft Modular Play systems in the Australasian area. SMP is still relatively new to this region but Playtec are doing all they can to alert operators to the potential benefits that have already been proven elsewhere.

The company claim a well marketed SMP system can increase business by 30% to 40% if added onto a restaurant or shopping centre. Capturing the family market is potentially a very big catch.

In Australia "Pay for Play" centres have opened, incorporating SMP, which have an emphasis on "Fitness, Fun and Learning." Intencity has married SMP to their major video game activities to encourage families to come along. As SMP becomes a more common sight Playtec are well positioned in a market which has still got a lot of growing to do if it follows the trend of the USA

The modular nature of the equipment means that you have great flexibility when designing a playground. All manufacturers have a list of activities (or "events", as they like to call them) and you can basically go through their catalogues and choose which things you would like to include in your system.

Like everything else in this industry, soft play components have come a long way since the concept was first developed in the late 1980's. The materials are stronger and the range of colours and textures is much, much wider. Manufacturers are developing new events all the time so along with the slides, ball pits and tunnels, operators now have the choice of many interactive and themed features.

Puzzle games, sound effects activated by movement, areas themed like rocket ships or cars with steering wheels and other gadgets... the list just goes on and on. If a child's imagination is stimulated, they will enjoy themselves and their parents will consider the visit to your centre as time well spent.

Soft modular play is an excellent attraction for the younger visitors to an FEC and it clearly marks a location as "family friendly". If operated properly, soft play systems also draw consistent, long-term income - but you have to provide a comprehensive program of activities around the equipment to keep visitors interested.

Discovery Zone showed the industry that you can't just install soft play and expect it to earn all by itself. But for operators willing to go that extra mile, the equipment has proven to be an excellent investment, with the ability to really draw families into a location. It seems that Discovery Zone have also learned their lesson, and officials from the company say they will, under Chapter 11, "address the problems caused by rapid expansion", and re-establish themselves in the market place in the near future.

New CEO, Donna Moore, is developing *"new marketing programs and entertainment concepts that will improve the Discovery Zone experience for kids and their parents".*

After all its losses ($139 million odd), Discovery Zone still wants to operate soft modular play systems. That has to say something about the potential for making money with this type of equipment.

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FEC's - more than just kids play

by Alfred Penz, Prime Play Systems

Family entertainment centres are gaining tremendous popularity. From Hong Kong to Madrid; from Seoul to Santiago hundreds of play centres are opening their doors to enthusiastic youngsters. Little Spaniards are navigating the moon walk, small Chileans are wriggling through the roller squeeze and wee Scots are exploring the cave crawl. The world has learned to like soft playgrounds.

Why? It isn't just the fun of exploring and trying out all these wonderful attractions. What are our kids doing these days? The hours they are glued to the television set provide no exercise and no interaction with other children. Then there are the hours of study and homework using a computer which still offer no physical exertion whatsoever.

Children don't walk much any more. In the cities they don't play out in the street like we used to. No hockey, hopscotch or tag, Moms don't let them much out of sight. When going to school, to a sports event, or to the beach, most of the time it will be mum or dad, or a friend's parent to drive them there. This holds especially true for large urban areas where personal safety has become a major factor, and where fear of lurking perverts prevails.

Times have changed, but youngsters still need to move, to exercise their bodies and play systems provide a safe play environment. They are located indoors, a fact which is especially valuable in countries of extreme cold or hot climates such as Alaska, Arabia or the Philippines. They are sheltered from the rain, which is great for places of high precipitation such as Western Canada or countries with a monsoon period. They are usually climate controlled. Great attention is given to safety. There is plenty of expert supervisory personnel; all hard surfaces are sufficiently padded. There are security nets wherever a child could fall or tumble.

Operators do everything in their power to keep their little guests happy and safe. There is always lots of excitement, lots of exploration of new attractions, and interaction with others. The youngsters play with each other and the set. The attractions are designed to stimulate the imagination, the children animate each other.

SOFT PLAY SYSTEMS AS GYM SETS

Can you imagine a child working out in a gym for several hours? They would become bored after a few minutes.

Think of soft play as a giant gym set. One the children love and are willing to voluntarily work for hours. Climbing, sliding, swinging wriggling, pushing, jumping, stretching, tumbling, the systems provide maximum activity exercising the cardiovascular system and every muscle in the body. Playing the set requires co-ordination, concentration and planning; yet it is so relaxing for the kids.

Families love the quality time spent at entertainment centres.

Most family fun centres include concessions, redemption games, and rides and cater for birthdays and other parties. Adults socialise with other parents over coffee or soft drinks while the kids play. The centres have become part of a way of life for many people. Something to look forward to.

PRIME PLAY SYSTEMS LET PARENTS PLAY TOO

Prime Play Systems Inc. of Vancouver, Canada is one of the most successful designers and manufacturers of soft play systems with installations on four continents. Their 34" diameter tubing and 44" junction boxes allow adults to enter the set to retrieve or supervise or even play with a child. These tubes are tailored for high volume centres.

Prime Play Systems offers free consultation on how to establish a soft play entertainment centre. You can reach them on +1 (604) 882 1801.

Kidstuff '96

Kids Games

The growth in family entertainment centres, and even venues dedicated purely to children, indicates how important the younger segment has become to amusement operators. As a result, there is now a wide selection of equipment designed specifically for the under-12 market.

Kiddie rides and soft play equipment are covered in detail elsewhere in this issue, but there are many more options for an operator trying to cater for kids. There are lots of advantages to having children's games in your facility, especially if they can be seen from the entrance. Such equipment marks your centre as "family friendly", so you are more likely to attract that all-important family business.

Also, it is surprising just how much buying power young children have. Mum and dad have to pay for it, but more often than not, they are happy to do so if their children really want something. And if you've ever had a whining child persistently asking to do this or that, you will know how difficult it is to say "no".

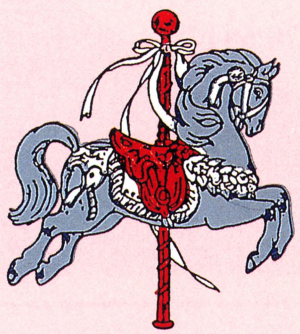
So let's take a quick look at some of the "kiddie games" available on the market. It could be argued that most redemption games are suitable for children, but these games can sometimes be hard for young people to play due to their size. As a result, most manufacturers also make "Kiddie", "Mini", or "Junior" versions of some popular games which are scaled down in size.

Basketball games are a good example, and most would agree a full sized basketball is a big thing for a young child to throw, and few youngsters would have the strength to shoot a ball into a full-sized hoop. ICE produces their very colourful Mini-Dunxx; Smart Industries has Shoot to Win Jnr - Chuckles the Clown; and Skee-Ball have just released their "Super Shot Junior", to name just a few examples. Besides being smaller in size, the cabinets of these games have much more colourful graphics than their full-sized counterparts .

Working on the same idea, there are kid versions of the ever-popular whacking games (e.g. Bob's Space Racer's Whac-A-Mole), air hockey tables (Dynamo, Great American Billiards, Nova and Coastal Amusements all produce them), and shooting pieces (like Meltec's Big Mouth Jnr). Companies like Namco and Coin Concepts produce junior versions of such games as Godzilla Wars and Froggy, and Hazelgrove Superleague even make a pint-sized pool table for kids to play on. The list just goes on and on...

Aside from those games actually labelled as "kiddie" or "junior", there are many pieces that are obviously targeting the kids market. They usually have col-ourful cabinets with cartoon-style decor and a theme that appeals to kids. A good example is ICE's Mouse Attack with its simple gameplay and cute cabinet, complete with a large "cheese" console.

Games with themes that children will instantly be attracted to include Lazer-Tron's Flintstones Bedrock Game; Funhouse Amusement's Bozo Buckets II; Coin Concept's Ol McDonald and ICE's Hungry Hungry Hippos which is based on the popu-



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lar board game. The Doyle line (now manufactured by ICE Inc) features a complete range of children's games with nursery rhyme themes like Mother Hubbard. A selection of these placed together is almost irresistible to kids.

Smart Industries' Feed Big Bertha is another popular children's game as they love the spectacle of Big Bertha's stomach growing as she gorges herself on balls. In fact, any redemption game which has some sort of comical movement will normally be a winner with kids.

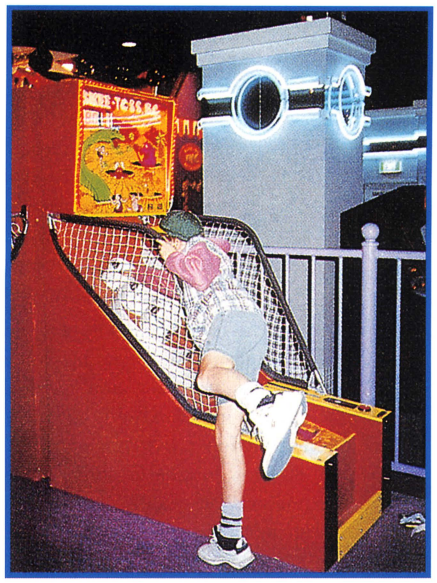
Island Design have released Spider Stompin' DeLuxe, as a sequel to the Jaleco produced Spider Stompin' and both games go well with kids

When it comes to operating children's redemption games, tests have shown that they are most profitable when they are set to pay out a specific amount of tickets every time a coin is vended. Fixing the pay-out in this way means that every child will win a decent amount of tickets even if they are not very good at playing the game - and children love tickets. It also stops older kids from cheating the machines because no matter how many balls they get in the right hole, they will still only win the same amount of tickets as a less skilled child.

However, there are other options besides redemption games to furnish a kiddie area in your centre. Youngsters just love sound and movement so something like Coastal Amusements' Dancing Puppets would probably do very well. When kids insert a coin, a clown, can-can girl or cowboy sings and dances to entertain youngsters. Fun Industries Copy Cat is another interesting piece as it tests kid's memory skills. Players have to try and repeat a sequence of lighted buttons and tones.

If you have soft play equipment such educational games fit in very well. Video games that encourage children to be creative with shapes and colours have been very successful in this type of environment.

Finally, there are even children's options for laser tag. As reported in our feature article a few months ago, many manufacturers are now supplying smaller vests and packs for children to wear. Q-Zar have even developed an entirely new children's concept called Q-Tag where the vests and guns are small, brightly coloured and the gun has a protective rubber tip. The game takes place in a colourful arena with lots of soft obstacles, in the style of soft play.



A fixed number of tickets prevents kids or adults 'rorting' a game

As you can see, the kiddie market is well and truly catered for by manufacturers in all areas of the amusement industry. It's a lucrative market that many operators could probably pay more attention to, and with the mini baby boom we are now experiencing, it can only get better in the future.

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STREET REDEMPTION

the lure of the instant prize...

In most people's minds, redemption games go hand in hand with family entertainment centres, in some cases they are successful in arcades ... but rarely do people mention "redemption" and "street locations" in the same sentence.

This is because, at its best, redemption is a sophisticated blending of amusement machine operation and retailing. Presentation of merchandise is all important so the redemption prize counter is the centre of attention. In street locations, however, there's no room for such displays - and there isn't an attendant to man it anyway.

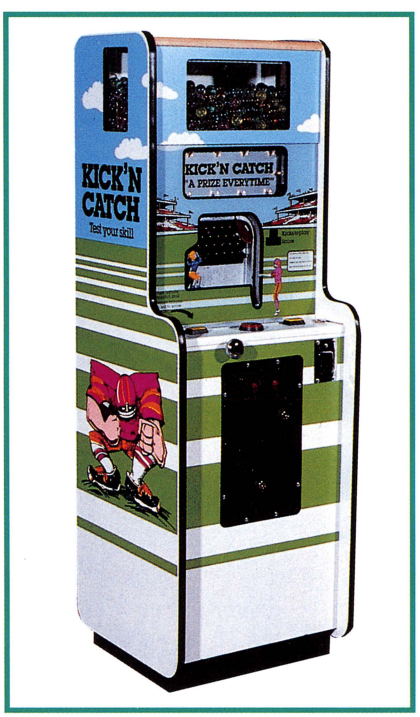
But this doesn't mean that redemption only has a place within the walls of an FEC. It's just a very different looking process out in the streets.

Of course the basic principle of giving players the chance to win a prize has been around for a long time with cranes and merchandisers. These machines have always been sited in a wide range of locations, including shops, airports and restaurants. The tantalising chance of winning a soft toy or other small prize, has always made cranes popular - even though the "game" is over quickly and there is limited entertainment value involved.

Street redemption games are a step beyond cranes in terms of gameplay. While they work on the same concept of dispensing a prize instead of redemption tickets, these games tend to be more interesting to play. While street redemption is still a small sector of the industry, there are a few manufacturers out there producing this type of equipment.

Fun Industries was probably one of the earliest companies to develop a street redemption concept, with their game Kick 'N Catch. Released in 1987, the game is a remake of an old tavern piece called Kicker Catcher which first appeared around 1948 and was operated in the USA for many years. The original game came in a solid oak cabinet, was completely mechanical, and did not vend.

Kick 'N Catch is a pachinko style game, where a ball is put into the playfield and it falls through pins. At the bottom of the playfield there is a football player and the aim is to manoeuvre the player so he catches the ball. Each successful catch gives the player 100 points and the machine can be set to vend prizes at any point value, including every time a coin is inserted.



Prizes for Kick 'N Catch are usually made up of such things as capsules, superballs, gum or jawbreaker candy, and the game also allows extending play, free games and bonus prizes.

More recently, Fun Industries have released a new version of the game with a baseball theme. Called Pop Fly, the game has more realistic sound effects, a bigger vending hopper and a more dramatic appearance as the cabinet is black with colourful graphics. The simple gameplay, however, is much the same.

According to Fun Industries' VP of sales, Mel La Force, Kick 'N Catch has had wide approval since its release in 1987, performing well in locations like roller skating rinks, pizza restaurants, cinemas, laundromats and arcades

"One of the strong points of both Kick 'N Catch and Pop Fly is their small size," he says. *"Their footprints are only 21 inches square, so they can fit into a lot of street locations. Also, comparatively speaking, these two games are inexpensive and last on location for many years, meaning their return on investment is very strong."*

The Vendgame series developed by PT Technologies and Specialty Coin Marketing follows much the same formula as the Fun Industries products, and have been designed with the street operator very much in mind. Mark McWilliams of Specialty Coin Marketing, believes such products have been few and far between, leaving street operators a bit out in the cold, with the focus being very much on FEC-type locations.

"Pool tables, jukeboxes, countertop videos and darts have been staple products for the street operator. They can add Vendgames to that list," he says. *"Vendgames are designed to be added to existing locations or can be used to create new locations. Either way, Vend-games provide incidental income and do not rob from existing equipment."*

"There are two reasons for this: first, they can be placed in different areas of the location and, second, they appeal to a much younger age group."

Like Kick 'N Catch and Pop Fly, the Vendgame series are compact machines and are reasonably priced. There are two games in the series so far, although more are definitely planned. The first is Catch 'N Win and is similar to the Fun Industries games. The player attempts to catch as many balls as they can by moving the "catcher" as the balls from the top of the playfield. The more they catch, the more prizes they win.

The second game is called Whack 'N Win and draws on the ever popular "whacking" redemption games found in almost all amusement centres.

Whack 'N Win has a prehistoric theme and players have to hit the various dinosaurs as they light up. Prize payout is operator adjustable and the game can be programmed to award a prize to every player if desired.

An entirely different approach to street redemption has recently been put into play by Lazer-Tron with their Solar Spin game.

What makes Solar Spin different from the other games in Lazer-Tron's extensive range is the "Insta-Prize" feature. As the name suggests, this gives players the chance of winning an instant prize.

The gameplay is similar to the addictive Cyclone game by ICE Inc - players have to stop rapidly spinning lights at the jackpot slot to win lots of tickets. So far it sounds like another FEC redemption game, right? Well, the big difference comes with the Insta-Prize slot on the wheel which allows the location to merchandise any set of prizes they wish to market.

While this can be used as an attraction within amusement centres, it also gives Solar Spin the flexibility to be operated in many other types of location.

Says Kelley McDonald, marketing manager for Lazer-Tron: *"If locations can incorporate Insta-Prize games in their facility, the possibilities for street redemption is unlimited. Now any location, including rest-aurants, retailers, bars, or anyone who wants an extra draw of people, will have the ability to have a 'game' in their facility"*

"Imagine Toys-R-Us having a game with Insta Prize. They could merchandise small toys, gift certificates, coupons etc and the parents would love to try for these items. Bars could give away items like pitchers of beer, mixed drinks, appetizers, or even larger prizes like bikes. Games like Solar Spin/Insta-Prize will allow locations other than FEC's and arcades to run redemption."

The spinning wheel in Solar Spin is created by a video image which makes it quite visually appealing. The video format also makes the game a lot more flexible because the slots can be programmed to pay any number of tickets from 1 to 25 or the Insta-Prize. Ten different prizes can be programmed into the game - and they can be absolutely anything you want. The only limit is that the name of the prize can't be any more than 18 characters long.

The frequency in which the different prizes can be won is also completely adjustable. This means the more expensive prizes can be programmed to occur less often than the cheaper ones. Having good prizes in the surprise slot is a great enticement to play, and prizes with a high perceived value, but a low actual value, get the best results. This is because you can give these prizes away frequently at a relatively low cost.

Of course the Insta-Prize concept also works very well in FECs and other amusement centres, as it gives players an extra incentive to play the game. If presented properly with a sign to draw players' attention, possible prizes on display around the machine, and photos of winners with the larger prizes. Testing has shown that Solar Spin can earn incredibly well, achieving some excellent results for Lazer-Tron in what has been a fairly slow market for redemption.

The company is extremely confident that the concept will take Redemption to another level and be successful in both FEC and street locations. They are currently developing other games which include the Insta-Prize feature.

"We are currently working on enhancing the whole product and are going towards units that will work anywhere they are put, specifically non-redemptive locations," says Kelley McDonald.

"Our next one will hopefully be shown at AMOA in Dallas. We fully believe that this is the hottest thing to hit our industry since the progressive jackpot and we intend to take this feature as far as we can."

By developing the Insta-Prize feature, Lazer-Tron have effectively broadened the market for Solar Spin, a wise move now that the American redemption market has started to slow down.

"Yes we believe that there is a strong future in street redemption. I have heard from many operators that this is the way they see things going," McDonald says.

Benchmark Entertainment have also addressed the redemption needs of street operators with a plug-in unit that can be fitted to the existing game, Spin for Tickets, which has shown itself to be very popular, or their coming new game, Slam Bingo, which allows the operator to put small prizes in a custom built dispenser and operate the games where there are no Redemption facilities.

However, Mel LaForce from Fun Industries is not so sure street redemption is capable of providing a major new source of income for operators.

"I believe street redemption will be steady, but will see no real dramatic increase," he predicts. *"I think there will always be a place for vending redemption machines, or 'instant' redemption as I like to call it"*

"However, I am fearful for the overall growth of redemption in general, at least in North America, because of the fight for the amusement dollar and recreation time.... We are still looking at new games, but not necessarily redemption. We are looking at tavern pieces and kiddie oriented games and some of these pieces may vend too."

Whether or not street redemption takes off in a big way, the concept of an instant prize is well worth considering. It is a real drawcard as far as players are concerned, and could give lagging cash boxes just the boost they need.

There are many other ways to approach this type of redemption besides the few games we've covered in this article. One idea that was successful a couple of years ago was to attach a card dispenser to Konami's Run 'N Gun basketball game.

This was at the height of the basketball card craze and this relatively cheap addition to the machine attracted players in substantial numbers and in markets where it was used, kept the game popular with players for a longer period than in markets where it was operated as just a straight video game

With the current spate of basketball games on the market, this is a form of street redemption that could well work again. Kelley McDonald said of Lazer-Tron's Insta-Prize feature, *"the possibilities are limitless"*, and that can be said for the whole concept of street redemption.

NEW HI TECH ATTRACTIONS FOR OLYMPIC CITY 2000

Big things are happening in entertainment down on the waterfront of Sydney, Olympic City 2000, and when we say big things we are talking ten storeys high and 100,000 square feet of hi tech entertainment area, in two new facilities that will change the whole family entertainment scene in Australia's major city.

The two dramatic additions to the Sydney cityscape, Sega World and the Sydney Imax, will be located at Darling Harbour, a redeveloped rail and sea freight terminal, adjacent to the city's business district and both of which will provide the harbourside city a new dimension of fun in the near future.

Sega World is set to become Sydney's answer to Disneyland, it will be the first of a concept that Sega hope to realise globally. Like Disneyland, Sega World will be concerned with family entertainment but with a greater emphasis on interactivity in the games and rides. Patrons should not expect to just sit on the ghost train or the roller coaster and watch the scenery go past. You will be involved.

At this stage it is not exactly clear what this involvement will consist of. Possibly we will have crazed Sonics leaping randomly from bushes at unsuspecting riders or maybe you will be expected to defend yourself against herds of little blue rabid hedgehogs which run free-range in the depths of the ghost train. But then again, probably not, because Sega give the assurance that all the latest rides will be suitable to everyone regardless of age, health or nervous state.

We know there will be an indoor interactive roller coaster, a Ghost Hunter ghost train, a Buggies Ride called Mud Bazooka which involves shooting tennis balls at other punters, and Virtual Reality rides similar to Star Tours at Disneyland. Beyond that the Sales and Marketing Manager Susan Markey could only tell us that 'everything will be interactive' and that a general trait of rides will be that your 'talent will be assessed at the end.' She said that everything is still changing on a daily basis and that there are continually mind expanding surprises. There will apparently be no video arcade as such but the classic Sega games will be present, and they will all be bigger and better. We have been promised more information about the rides come September because at this stage details of the rides are 'still coming out of the software designer's imaginations.' And that's about as state-of-the-art as it gets.

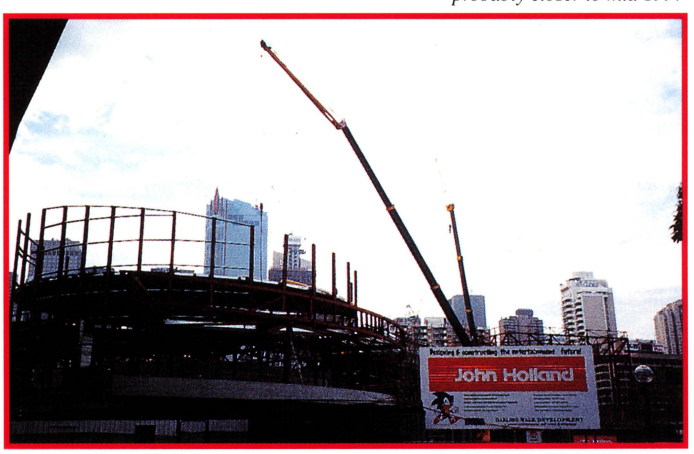
The Imax Theatre that Cinema Plus are putting up next door is not likely to be overshadowed by Sega World - neither figuratively nor literally. The ten storey building will house, amongst other things, a 30 x 30 metre screen whose sole purpose in life is to immerse people in 'intense visual and aural experiences.' The images will be 'super real, super sharp and high definition.' The screen is 20% bigger than any other in the world and the theatre holds up to 540 people. To view, the audiences seats are suspended a third of the way up the screen so that you are left adrift and at the mercy of the images. There will be 15,000 watts of 6 channel digital surround sound and poor old reality, the promo claims, will run second to Sydney Imax.

As well as the screen there will be a restaurant, retail shops and a conference centre. Cinema Plus plans to make 15 more IMAX Theatres around Australia and New Zealand similar to the $20 Million creation at Darling Harbour.

Whilst Sydneysiders will now have to wait until at least early 1997 for Sega World, Sydney Imax will be giving reality an inferiority complex by Spring this year.

With many other major developments in entertainment being planned, it's clear that by the year 2000 Olympics, Sydney, already one of the most beautiful cities in the world, will also be one of the leaders in hi tech family entertainment.

Sydney's Imax is on schedule and will be up and running well before Christmas, but Sega World, originally due to open in December, as can be seen, will not achieve it's planned date, and it's opening is probably closer to mid 1997



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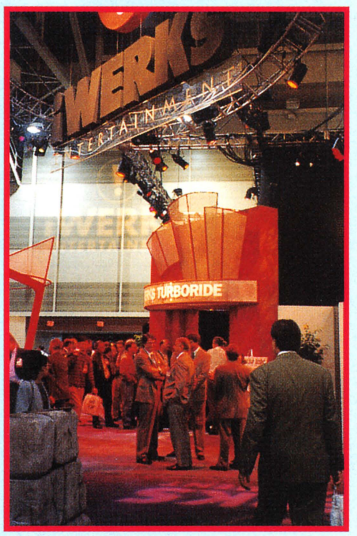
CBI MAGAZINE'S MONTHLY COVERAGE OF FEC'S • Parks • LBE'S

AND OTHER CONCEPTS IN FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT

HOYTS OPEN AUSTRALIA'S FIRST IWERKS SIMULATION THEATRE



Hoyts Cinemas opened their largest cinema complex in Australia on July 9 at Highpoint in Melbourne, which completes Stage 1 of the company's two-stage redevelopment project and includes Australia's first "Cinemotion" Entertainment Centre. The completion of Stage 1's additional two "megascreen" cinemas, and Cine-motion centre, gives Hoyts' Highpoint a seating capacity of 3,375 and a total of 12 screens. The project represents an initial investment of $6 million.

Other highlights include tiered stadium seating (guaranteeing patrons of all ages a clear view of the screen), surround digital sound, the latest in picture presentation technology, advance sales, reserve seating and self-service ticketing machines.

The "Cinemotion" Entertainment Centre will feature Iwerk's TurboRide and will be Australia's first installation of this equipment. Guided by sight, sound and motion seats that move in sync with 5-minute thrill films, Hoyts visitors will experience a multimedia fantasy that cannot be duplicated in the home. The dramatic ride-simulation films use an innovative 70mm reversing projection to achieve larger images, greater clarity, and stronger colour saturation. The experience is also enhance by advanced 6-channel sound systems.

To debut Cinemotion, Hoyts has scheduled the two Iwerks films "Dino Island" (dinosaurs in the land civilisation forgot) and "Red Rock Run" (a wild race inside a volcanic mine shaft).

Mr Peter Ivany, chief executive officer of Hoyts Cinemas said, *"As pioneers of Australia's multiplex cinema theatres, Hoyts has been committed to improving the movie-going experience for years. Cinemotion is one of the single biggest steps we've taken to provide our customers with a truly unique encounter It really establishes a significant point of difference because you not only see it, you feel it too. There's a scene in 'Dino Island' where we actually have the breath of the giant T-Rex fog up the windshield! It's high-energy fun and the perfect complement to our new multiplex,"*

Stage II - the addition of four more "megascreens" - is due for completion early next year and will house an additional 1,951 seats (with an overall seating capacity of 5,326) and a total of 16 screens. (Megascreen cinemas have greater screen width [22m] and height [9.4m] than traditional multiplex screens).

Hoyts Cinemas currently operate over 150 screens in Australia and are the number one cinema operator in New Zealand and tenth in the USA. The initial agreement between Hoyts and Iwerks is for 10 TurboRide sites worldwide.

United Kingdom

NAME CHANGE FOR THOMPSON

THOMSON ENTERTAINMENT

Thomson Training & Simulation has unveiled a new name and logo for its division that makes simulators for the entertainment industry. The unit has been re-named Thomson Entertainment.

The name change comes complete with with a new look logo depicting an abstract image of the dynamic movement experienced in its simulators. The logo was designed by Visual Identity Ltd of Sussex.

Thomson Entertainment's general manager, Paul Spence commented, *"We believed it was important for us to have a distinct identity and name to reflect the business we're in. Our customers range from major theme parks to smaller arcade operators and, to some of them, training and simulation didn't appear to have much to do with their business. What we're ultimately selling is a high thrills entertainment experience - which happens to be based on advanced flight simulation technology."*

Spain - Andorra

NEW PARK GROUP MOVE INTO ANDORRA

Spain's leading Family Entertainment Centre chain, the New Park Group have opened their first FEC outside Spain, in neighbouring Andorra.

Covering an area of over 6,000 square feet in the commercial heart of key city, Andorra La Vella, the new FEC is divided into seven different areas; Children, Redemption, Sports, Strength, Fortune Telling, 3D VR Simulators and high end, Dedicated Video Games.

The New Park Group have worked with the Government in establishing the centre and are also working with local organisations and businesses like MacDonalds in promoting the family entertainment concept.

The Andorra project is the first move in New Park's expansion plans which centre mainly around South America and will see them open FEC's in Mexico, Brasil, Argentina and possibly Russia in joint ventures with local operators.

United Kingdom

3 STOREY FEC AND WORKING PARK FOR LIW

International Leisure Industry Week to be held at the NEC in Birmingham next month (24th - 26th September) will feature "The Funway", a three storey Family Entertainment Centre and "The Great Outdoors", a fully operational Adventure Park alongside regular features that include the International Rides Gallery.

Each level of The Funway will be dedicated to different aspects of European style FEC's, which as well as the normal coin-op games and attractions will have a whole floor dedicated to the latest in childrens play equipment and games.

The Great Outdoors park will feature theme rides, water attractions, the latest in outdoor catering and more childrens attractions.

Thailand

REMOTE PIRATE BOATS BIG IN BANGKOK

Remote controlled Pirate Boats are proving a big attraction at Bangkok's Magic Island Centre, a creatively themed, indoor centre that features a Lighthouse as the focal point of it's maritime style decor.

The Pirate Boats were supplied and installed by Tornado International of the UK who have had a great run in Thailand since they sold a large installation to the Seacon Square mall. They are now preparing equipment to fill an order for another big order of 10 Super Trucks, Orbiter Bumper Cars and a Aqua Blaster (pictured) for another Bangkok site.

Editorial

Sidah Russell

As you'll notice when you open up this month's Family Fun International section, we have a full colour feature on roller coasters.

The big thrill rides have really come into their own in recent times as both parks and FEC's search for that special attraction. For major theme parks, we are talking about the tallest, fastest and most exciting rides possible - the ultimate in thrills. These types of roller coasters incorporate the latest in technology and engineering. Their track work soars high into the sky, providing an exciting visual focus for amusement parks everywhere.

But these are not the roller coasters which are the focus of this editorial. (Although there's plenty of info and pictures on them in our feature article if you're interested - and we know you are!) Like all things in this industry, the big, exciting products get all the attention. But often the smaller, less spectacular pieces go about earning their way in a steady, quiet fashion.

This is definitely true of roller coasters. The big thrill rides with their stomach-lurching drops, weightless zones and upside-down periods are not for everyone. But a nice gentle roller coaster, with dips and turns that don't leave you feeling ill can be quite a lot of fun.

FEC's have provided a new market for many ride manufacturers, with the emphasis being on smaller rides and scaled down roller coasters. And this is not only because of space limitations...

Family entertainment is the key. It's essential to provide a ride that the whole family - including the toddlers and the grandparents - can get enjoyment out of together. There's nothing like a shared experience.

The expansion of the amusement industry into markets like Asia, South America, the Middle East and South Africa is also having an effect. The cultures in these regions are very family oriented and "thrill rides" are not quite as popular.

Any venue aiming for the family market, even an amusement park in the United States, needs to have enjoyable but gentle rides if it is to be successful. Of course, the big thrill rides are part of the overall balance... but they are certainly not the only type of roller coaster to consider.

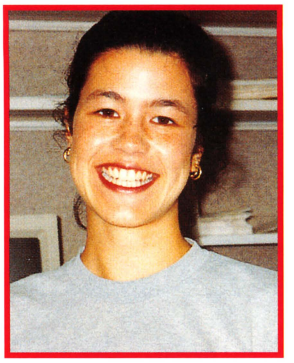
Big is better when it comes to marketing a theme park, or for giving your visitors that ultimate thrill - but what if that's not what they want? You also need a ride for all those people who say, "There's no way you're getting me on that thing!"

Como se darán cuenta al abrir la Sección de Entretenimientos Familiares Internacionales, tenemos una presentación a todo color sobre las Montañas Rusas.

Los Rides que producen grandes emociones han realmente surgido por sí mismos en tiempos recientes, ya que tanto los parques como los FEC's buscan esta atracción tan especial. Para los grandes parques temáticos, nosotros estamos hablando de los Rides mas altos, mas rápidos y mas excitantes posibles - lo máximo en emoción. Estos tipos de Montañas Rusas incorporan lo mas novedoso en tecnología e ingeniería. Sus rutas se elevan alto dentro del cielo, otorgándole a los pasajeros una visión increíble del paisaje que rodea a todo parque de entretenimientos en cualquier lugar.

Pero éstas no son las Montañas Rusas a las cuales nos referimos en esta Editorial (a pesar de que hay mucha información y muchas fotos sobre ellas en el artículo sobre las Montañas Rusas, si a Ud. le interesa - y estamos seguros que Ud. está interesado!). Como todas las cosas en esta industria, los productos grandes, excitantes, reciben toda la atención. Pero, muy a menudo, la piezas mas chicas, menos espectáculares, hacen su camino produciendo ganancias en una forma mas tranquila pero estable.

Esto es definitivamente verdadero con respecto a las Montañas Rusas. Los Rides grandes y excitantes, con sus caídas que provocan un vacio en el estõmago, una sensación de vértigo y períodos donde el viajante está boca abajo, no son para todas las personas. Pero una Montaña Rusa suave, con declives y giros que no provocan que el pasajero se sienta mal, puede resultar también muy divertida.



Los FEC's resultan un nuevo mercado para los fabricantes de Rides, poniendo acento en Rides mas pequeños o Montañas Rusas a escala. Y ésto, no es solo debido a las limitaciones de espacio...

La clave es Entretenimientos Familiares. Es esencial proveer un Ride que toda la familia - incluyendo los mas pequeñitos y los abuelos - puedan disfrutar juntos. No hay nada como una experiencia compartida.

La expansión de la industria de entretenimientos a mercados como Asia, Sud América, el Medio Oriente y Sud Africa también tiene efectos. Las culturas en estas regiones están muy orientadas hacia la familia y los "rides excitantes" no son tan populares.

Cualquier lugar que esté orientado al mercado de la familia, incluyendo un parque de entretenimientos en Estados Unidos, necesita poseer Rides que sean entretenidos pero a su vez, que sean suaves si se busca su éxito. Por supuesto, los Rides de gran excitación forman parte de un balance global... pero sin duda no son la unica parte a considerar en las Montañas Rusas.

Grande es mejor cuando se trata de vender un parque temático, o para dar a sus visitantes la excitación máxima - pero que tal si ésto no es lo que ellos buscan? Ud. también necesita un Ride para todas aquellas personas que dicen: "No hay forma que Ud. logre que yo me suba a esa cosa!"

Fun Expo '96

IAFEC'S GOLDEN TOKEN AWARDS/SILENT AUCTION

Choosing a new name that reflects the highest standards and efforts, while also suggesting the lure of fortune and the fantastic, IAFEC will hold its newly christened "Golden Token Awards" at Fun Expo, at the Sands Convention Centre in Las Vegas, October 9-12. The 3rd Annual Awards Ceremony, to be held Friday, October 11, recognise excellence and creativity in the FEC industry.

Categories for recognition are: Most Creative Promotion; Best Use of Logo; Best Facility Brochure; Best Community Service; Best Advertising Campaign and two new categories, Best Display of Prizes; and Most Creative Birthday Party Package. Suppliers will be recognised for Best New Product/Facility Element, Best Customer Support/Service and Best Merchandise Display. Deadline for submission of entries is Friday August 23 and members are encouraged to participate.

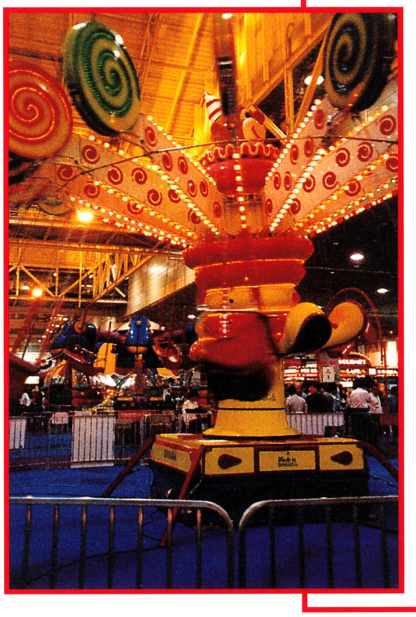
Contact Pam Kaminsky on: Tel: +1 (914) 993 9297 • Fax: +1 (914) 993 9219

IAFEC SILENT AUCTION

Proving once again that action speaks louder than words. IAFEC will hold its 3rd Annual Silent Auction at this year's Fun Expo. Chaired for the third time by Gary Warner of Coin Concepts, the auction will raise funds to support industry research including the most comprehensive study ever undertaken on FEC's.

"In the past two years, we have raised more than $50,000 to support groundbreaking research which sheds light on a business that even veterans admit can be somewhat inscrutable," explained Warner.

Contributed products - which have included games, redemption merchandise, plush toys, consulting services, travel packages, kiddie rides, sports memorabilia and other unique items - are showcased in a prominent, area in the lobby entrance to the Show.



At the Silent Auction booth, attendees bid for items, which are usually purchased for less than their normal price.

IAAPA

ENTRIES NOW ACCEPTED FOR ANNUAL IAAPA AWARDS

IAAPA is also accepting entries for its annual awards. The Annual Red Hot and Gold Award will honour excellence in visual merchandising display. Only amusement facility members in good standing may participate in the competition. Entries will be evaluated on creativity and originality and the deadline for entries is September 2, 1996.

The Annual Brass Ring Awards will honour excellence in marketing and advertising with a September 6th deadline for entries in these categories The Annual Golden Wave Awards will honour excellence in waterpark operations. Awards will be presented for Best New Attraction, Best In-Park Revenue Generating Idea, Best New Employee Incentive Program, and Best New Promotion Generating 1,000 or more in attendance. The deadline for entries is October 1, 1996.

To receive entry forms, contact IAAPA on: Phone: +1 (703) 836 4801 or Fax: +1 (703) 836 6742

News

United States

LJ GREENE JOINS GL TECHNOLOGY AND PUTTING CHALLENGE 2

LJ Greene, well known marketing ace who has worked mainly in Pinballs with Williams and Premier has taken over the marketing of GL Technology's promising new golf game, Putting Challenge 2.

LJ's new role as International Marketing Manager means her familiar face will again be seen at all the major trade shows as she looks after the promotion of all GL TEchnology's products.

Fortunately there are plenty of selling points to this new version of Putting Challenge, an update of the original and quite popular game manufactured by ICE. One of the main features is its extremely compact size, which is an impressive 45% smaller than the original unit.

It also has an improved ball return system which stops balls from getting stuck underneath, making the game an easy-to-operate, low maintenance piece of equipment.

France

THE WORKS LICENSES HI-DEFINITION VIDEO TO FUTURESCOPE

The Works, a California-based entertainment development company and Matsushita/Panasonic, have licensed "Adventures in Audiana" to the French theme park, Futurescope.

The High Definition Video presentation takes the audience on a magical journey to the mythical, melodious world of Audiana where they travel from the rowdy Rock City to classical Orchestria and on to Jazzland. The tour guides are whimsical band of musical notes.

Adventures in Audiana is totally computer generated, with a five track audio track featuring an original musical score, also produced by The Works. The show was originally created for the Japanese electronic giant, Panasonic and premiered at Wakayama's World Resort Expo, the World Festival Exposition in Mie, Japan and various Matsushita/Panasonic show rooms throughout Asia.

The original Japanese sound track was re-recorded in French for Futurescope.

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FUN EXPO '96

Programs help coin-op distributors and operators connect with FEC customers...

If you operate or distribute amusements to FEC's, bowling centres, skating rinks and/or restaurants, Fun Expo has exciting new programs to help you meet new customers.

The 6th annual Trade Show, taking place at the Sands Expo Centre in Las Vegas, will be held October 9-12. Along with 1,000 booths from 400 exhibitors offering unique products and services, Fun Expo '96 offers free registration, a regional referral program, show tour opportunities and an invitation-only "Coin-op Connection" cocktail party, in addition to new lower-priced targeted seminars.

A survey conducted in May, 1996 revealed that operators and distributors view trade shows as a primary tool for networking with clients, but that few structured opportunities were being offered. They confirmed that they come to Fun Expo not only for new product information, but to learn more about existing FEC customers and to prospect for new customers.

Based on the survey results, Fun Expo have created several new programs to promote these goals. Those who register at this year's trade show can sign up for a referral program through which Fun Expo will refer buyers in their region to them for free exhibit passes. Fun Expo will also assist participating operators and distributors who wish to offer tours of the show to individuals or groups, whether fun centre owners, developers or other leisure businesses.

An invitation only "Coin-op Connection" cocktail party, sponsored by Play Meter, provides a casual atmosphere to meet current customers and court new ones. Invited guests - active FEC owners and developers - will join distributors and operators at this free show kick-off event, 5:00-6:30 pm on Wednesday, October 9.

According to show manager Bailey Beeken, *"Many distributors and operators are involved in the FEC and recreation businesses either as partners, owners or as providers of equipment. On the other hand, FEC owners and potential owners coming from outside coin-op are sometimes uncertain about the role of distributors and operators, and the relationship they need with these important sectors of the industry."* Beeken explains that Fun Expo has instituted new programs because *"we want to see FEC owners and potential owners meet distributors and operators who can best service their needs, and start establishing mutually profitable relationships."*

Seminars have also been revamped and this year, Fun Expo includes 2 great general industry sessions in its Fun Pass show entry, priced at $35 per person advance ($20 for IAFEC members). Some sessions of interest this year: Viva La Coin-Op Revolution: Change is Good!; High Tech 2001: The Visionaries Speak; Merchandise Management: Controlling Profit and Loss; Laser Attractions; Interactive Sports; and International FECs: Gaining in the Translation.

The only amusement trade show in the west in 1996, Fun Expo takes advantage of America's #1 convention city - perfect for business and pleasure - with special Las Vegas events. The traditional "Thursday Night Family Fun Industry Blow-Out to be held pool-side at the Hard Rock Cafe, will feature great food, music and live entertainment and there's lots more. Anyone wanting information about exhibiting or attending Fun Expo can reach show manager, Bailey Beeken on: Phone: +1 (914) 993 9200 or Fax: +1 (914) 993 9210

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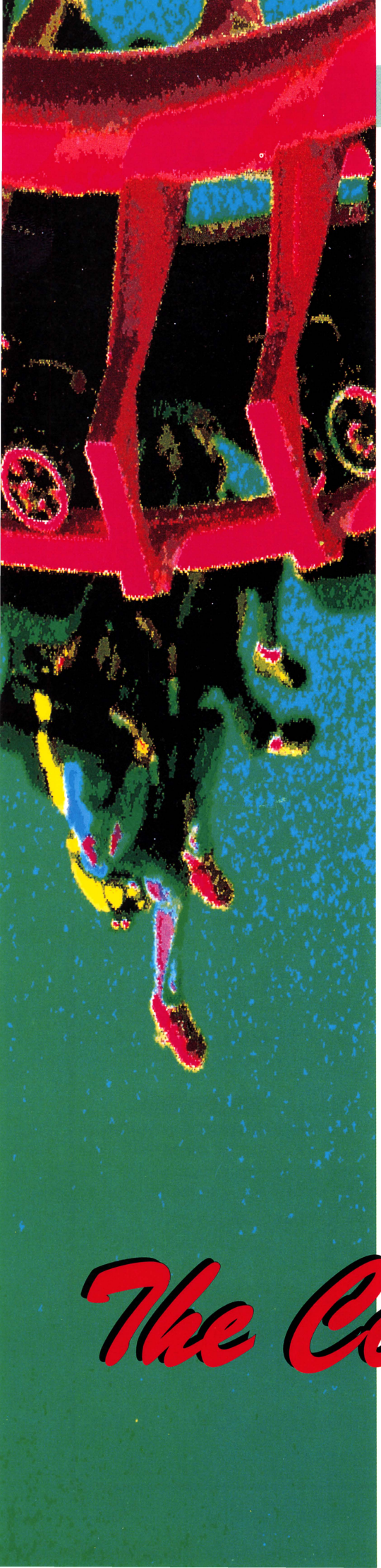

The Coaster - on a roll...

For the ultimate in thrills, it's still pretty hard to beat that all-time favourite theme park attraction - the roller coaster. There's something about the rush of wind in your face as you dive down a dip or whip round a bend that can't be recreated, not by even the most sophisticated motion simulator.

That slow rise as you inch your way up the fist big incline... the snail's pace only increases the suspense as you nervously look over the edge of your carriage. The view gets better and better as you go higher and higher. All the while you're thinking what goes up must, at some stage, come down... Then suddenly you're over the edge. The air hits your face, your stomach lurches and all around you people are laughing and screaming.

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Roller coasters have been around for a couple of hundred years, but the basic concept can be seen in the large ice slides built in many 15th century Russian towns. While the earliest wheeled roller coasters came out of Europe, the United States was where the ride really took off in a big way.

It all began in 1884 when the "Gravity Pleasure Switchback Railway" opened at Coney Island, giving visitors a fairly sedate ride over a series of wooden waves. The $1,600 investment needed to build the coaster was recovered in just three weeks. If only that was still possible!

Like all things, roller coasters have changed dramatically over the years. Technological advances have resulted in the creation of some truly amazing ride experiences. The first big revolution came with the steam-powered chain lift, invented by American Phillip Hinckle. This enabled roller coasters to be dragged up to new heights - only to come back down again at even greater speeds.

Today, roller coaster design is an extremely hi-tech business, no one without an engineering degree need apply. Recent years have seen the creation of roller coasters where people ride in a standing position; suspended looping coasters where riders actually hang from the outside of the track; rides which use the latest in electro-magnetic technology; and a roller coaster which reaches a speed of 100 mph.

While the "white knuckle" rides get most of the attention, the market for more sedate, family-oriented roller coasters should not be overlooked. Family entertainment centres are now important customers for most ride manufacturers. This is particularly true in regions like Asia and the Middle East where the emphasis is very much on the family unit. The key to these types of venues is to provide rides which parents, and children can all enjoy together.

Some major manufacturers estimate that 20 to 30% of their business now comes from smaller scaled-down rides for FEC's, and almost all companies said their sales to this market were on the rise. Big indoor venues are now being constructed specifically to hold large amusement rides like roller coasters and manufacturers are now designing smaller coasters specifically for indoor locations.

In parks too, there is usually a mix of rides and roller coasters. For every awesome, terrifying ride there is always two or three fun but more "leisurely" coasters.

However, the marketing power of an amazing thrill ride just can't be beaten. And with this being IAAPA's International Year of the Roller Coaster, the opportunities for promotion have never been better. In the United States the Senate proclaimed June 16-26 as National Roller Coaster Week, resulting in some well-organised promotional events to celebrate.

These included a "roller coaster wedding" on the new Mantis roller coaster at Cedar Point, with the lucky couple literally "taking the plunge" in more ways than one; a 100-hour coaster marathon by 11 riders at Blackpool Pleasure Beach; and a special fundraiser to save the world's oldest existing roller coaster, the Leap the Dips at Lakemont Park.

Aside from these special celebrations, roller coasters always feature strongly in general park promotions. In fact, they are often the flagship attraction, and there is no doubt that when a theme park gets an exciting new roller coaster, it boosts attendance.

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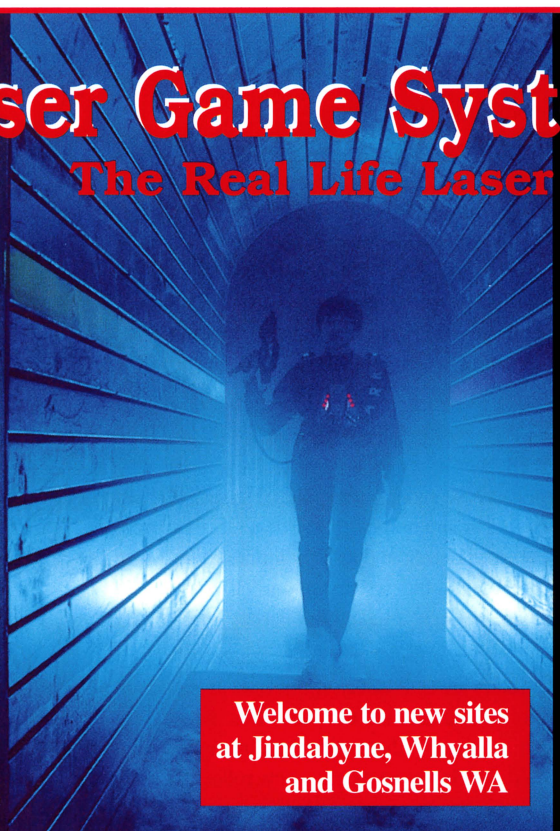

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"Leap the Dips" at Lakemont Park, the world's oldest roller coaster. Members of the Blair County Historical Society pose in the fashions of the early 1900's, when the ride was built

For the ultimate in thrills, it's still pretty hard to beat that all-time favourite theme park attraction - the roller coaster. There's something about the rush of wind in your face as you dive down a dip or whip round a bend that can't be recreated, not by even the most sophisticated motion simulator.

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Of course, the investment required to build a new roller these days is a hell of a lot more that the $1,600 paid in 1884 for Coney Island's "Gravity Pleasure Switch-back Railway": ideally, the coaster will not only pay its own way, but will also provide a focus for promoting the entire park.

Roller coasters are visually exciting, and for this reason they are excellent advertisements in themselves. The vision of people laughing and screaming as they hurtle past on a roller coaster certainly gets the message of fun and excitement across.

And this, of course, is what roller coasters are really all about. Since the first ice slides in 15th century Russia, people have wanted a physically thrilling experience without having to put their bodies on the line. The roller coaster offers a unique mixture of excitement (the feeling of doing something dangerous) and the reassuring knowledge that you are absolutely safe.

Technology has allowed today's coaster designers to include amazing loops, backward freefalls, inverted tracks... and all of these happen at unbelievable speeds. At the same time, however, technology has also made the roller coaster safer than it has ever been before.

A theme park's reputation can be totally destroyed if the public even suspects that its rides are unsafe. Every foot of every roller coaster is inspected by maintenance staff every day. This includes the track, the cars, and every single component.

Along with the old fashioned methods of ride inspection, today's technicians have the assistance of sensors, stress and failure monitors, and strain gauges to help them spot potential problem areas. Safety has also been increased by the types of materials and the methods used to build roller coasters.

Most of the recent technological developments have been with steel coasters. The first tubular steel-tracked roller coaster was Disney's "Matterhorn Bobsled Ride", built in 1959, although steel rides (constructed in the same

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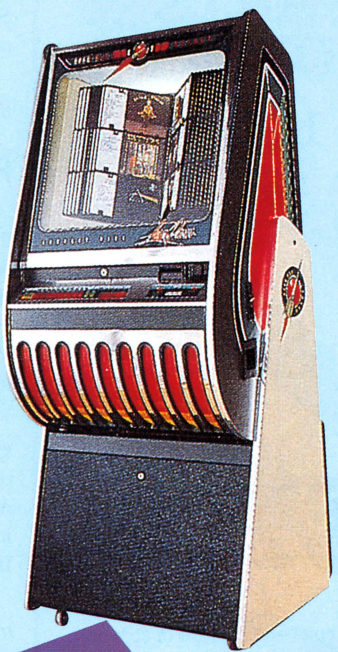

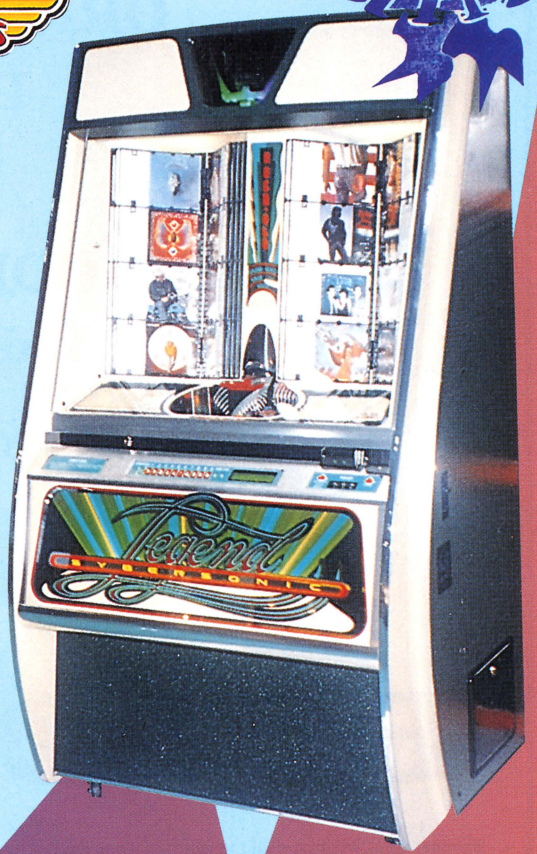

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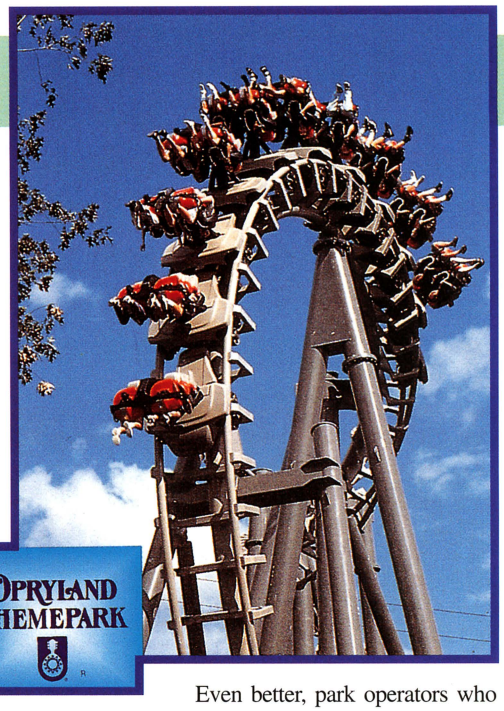
Roller Coaster Profiles

In order to celebrate The Year of the Roller Coaster, Cash Box asked a few of the major ride manufacturers to nominate their newest or most popular coaster, and talk about what makes the experience of riding it so special. Here's what they had to say...



VEKOMA

Top Gun, T^2, The Hangman, Mind Eraser, F^2, El Condor, The Great Nor'Easter. Call it anything you like, Vekoma's Suspended Looping Coaster has been one of the most successful roller coasters to his the amusement park market in recent years.

It has a total of five upside down experiences, with only two riders across and gives you a pretty exhilarating ride. As the seats are suspended from the track, riders fly out as the track loops and dips with their legs swinging freely.

Vekoma's first Suspended Looping Coaster was the "El Condor" which opened in Walibi Flevo in The Netherlands in 1994. Since then, five more have opened in North American parks, one in Japan and two further ones will be installed this year.

Suspended coasters are still a fairly new concept, and as a result, they attract a lot of attention. Because they look so different to traditional coasters, gaining publicity is pretty easy and the openings of all Vekoma's suspended coasters so far have been major media events.

Even better, park operators who have constructed a Suspended Looping Coaster have reported increases in attendance ranging from 20-40%.

"We've sold 25 Boomerangs but I think that our Suspended Looping Coaster is even more successful in the impact it has on a park's attendance," stated Roger Houben, vice president of marketing and sales for Vekoma. *"It's an exciting ride looks great and is at a great price, all the attributes of Boomerang only bigger and upside down!"*

In fact, the company's latest project has been to actually produce a suspended version of the Boomerang for the Liseberg theme park in Sweden. A feature of the ride is that the riders actually face each other.

"If you really want to see the face of fear, this is the ride," said Mats Wedin, the CEO.

PREMIER

Premier Rides is doing its bit to celebrate the Year of the Roller Coaster by introducing a few new hi-tech indoor coasters. Two of these rides include breakthrough technology launch systems that catapult riders from zero to 60 mph in less than 4 seconds, and the other takes riders through G-forces of up to 3.6.

Premier broke new ground in the launching system arena to create "The Outer Limits: Flight of Fear" by using linear induction motors in a roller coaster for the first time. The ride has been installed in the Paramount's two parks King's Island and King's Dominion.

"The system essentially creates a travelling magnetic wave, and the magnetic wave accelerates the vehicle," said Jim Seay, Premier executive vice president.

Concept and track design for The Outer Limits was done in collaboration with Paramount Parks. The coaster's interwoven design turns riders upside down four times and the 24-passenger train travels in total darkness through 30 vertical curves and more than 25 compound horizontal curves. All this happens

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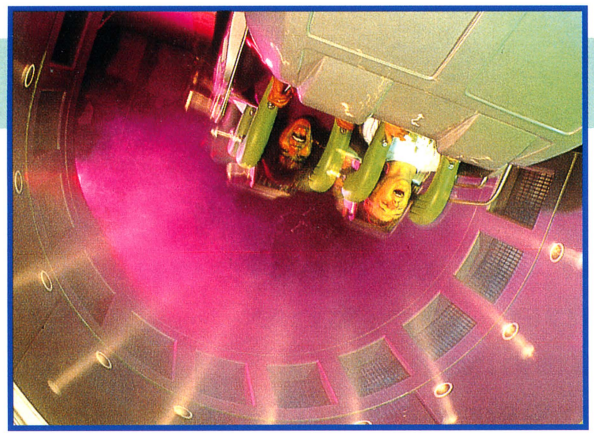

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At last year's IAAPA Premier took out two exhibitor awards for The Outer Limits: one for the actual ride and one for the technology used in the ride's catapult launch system. The linear induction motor allows the ride to accelerate extremely quickly from a standstill position.

The other new ride from Premier was custom-designed for Six Flags Over Texas. Called "Runaway Mountain', it carries riders through "Legendary Mountain" where they encounter treasures believed to have been hidden years ago by local legend Jean LaFitte. Riders journey into the mountain where they see evidence of past explorers who failed to return from their excursions. The whole roller coaster was designed to fit in a relatively small space but Premier still managed to get plenty of drops and turns into the track.

The indoor ride includes steep drops at angles up to 90 degrees, sharply banked turns at up to 82 degrees and two high-speed horizontal spirals. Runaway Mountain's 12-person trains travel at speeds up to 40 mph, and riders experience G-forces up to 3.6 due to the compact and continuous twists and turns.

MORGAN

Morgan Manufacturing opened their newest roller coaster, Wild Thing, in May of this year at Valleyfair, a 90 acre amusement park in Minnesota. And according to the guys at Morgan Manufacturing, it's one of the longest and wildest rides available.

With a first drop of over 200ft, track stretching over one mile in length, Wild Thing reaches up to 74 mph during its three minute ride. Three trains, carrying 36 passengers each, give the coaster a ride capacity of 1,700 guests per hour.

The roller coaster has plenty of action packed into it's "out and back" design.

Beginning along a straight line, Wild Thing has a series of hills, the first one towering over 200 feet in the air. The second hill, 98 feet high, features a long, low-gravity weightless zone. Riders then experience the third hill, 120 feet high, and the fourth hill, 112 feet high - the top end of which form sweeping "S" curves. The return stretch features a number of smaller negative-G hills, and right at the end, a surprise tunnel.

INTAMIN

Intamin have just seen the opening of their fastest roller coaster. In fact, as it reaches a top speed of 100 mph, "Superman The Escape" is the fastest roller coaster *ever* built! The ride, at the Six Flags Magic Mountain theme park in California, opened on June 20 in a special event to celebrate National Roller Coaster Week.

Members of the American Coaster Enthusiasts were given early morning exclusive ride time on Superman and the ride was promoted by a satellite media tour featuring interviews with roller coaster enthusiasts.

The ride itself is being billed as the tallest, fastest and most technologically advanced roller coaster ever built. Super-man reaches a height of 415 feet and is propelled, like Premier's latest ride, by state-of-the-art electro-magnetic motors. The six-ton vehicles are blasted from a standstill position to 100 mph in just seven seconds, before changing course to race up the 415 foot vertical tower.

At the top, riders experience an unprecedented 6.5 seconds of weightlessness as the vehicle reaches a total standstill.

Then the vehicle goes back down the tower backwards in a freefall that has the ride reaching 100 mph again before coming to a stop. There are twin parallel tracks so two cars can "race" each other from the loading station.

TOGO

Togo Japan is a leading roller coaster manufacturer with many innovative rides under their belt. A couple of good examples include Dangai and the Ultra Twister. The Dangai was the world's first standing coaster which was a dramatic change to the traditional sit-down ride.

The company believes that by standing on the coaster while it manoeuvres the dips, loops and helices, riders experience the unique thrill of being totally exposed.

ARROW DYNAMICS

Arrow Dynamics celebrated its 50th birthday earlier this year, and the company has good reason to commemorate its entry to the roller coaster industry.

Arrow was deeply involved in the laying the foundations for the world's most famous theme park - Disneyland, creating rides such as Snow White, the Mad Hatters Tea party, Peter Pan and Dumbo. The company's first roller coaster was Disney's Matterhorn Bobsled ride, which brought the ground breaking technology of tubular steel tracks to the industry.

Now Arrow Dynamics has a long list of dramatic rides under its belt. One of the most famous is the Pepsi Max Big One, the first super coaster to be built in the United Kingdom.

As riders leave the station, the Big One dives right, then turns 360 degrees and heads back toward the lift hill. The 201 foot lift hill rises and provides a view directly out over the waterfront so all you see is the vast, open sea. The train flies over the summit and heads downwards, turns around and then goes through a series of fast bends and swoops. There are many long, fast hills and superb turns, including a helix and themed tunnel.

Another ride that Arrow Dynamics is particularly proud of is the Desperado Coaster at Buffalo Bill's Resort/Casino just outside of Las Vegas. This was the world's highest coaster when it opened two years ago, although these sorts of records don't last long in the roller coaster industry!

Desperado's lift goes up through the roof of the casino and it has a unique, long-span truss to minimise the support system inside the casino. Boarding the custom bullet trains you ascend the lift before plummeting down a 225 vertical drop at 80 mph, through a tunnel, and under a C.P. Huntington train. Descent from the second hill sends you down a 155 foot spiral drop.

There are three areas in the ride where you experience near zero gravity and before the ride is over, Desperado wraps around the hotel thrilling guests as they arrive, and darts in and out of the man-made mountain.

"This ride is unique in that it starts inside the casino, goes through the roof, and then surrounds the hotel property before re-entering the building to return to the loading area," said Arrow's chairman Ronald Toomer. "Even though it is not in an amusement park in the traditional sense, it has been averaging about 100,000 riders per month since its opening."

As these two rides indicate, Arrow Dynamics specialise in designing customised rides both in and around existing structures and themes.

Other dramatic rides that the company has built in potentially difficult locations include: the Loch Ness Monster looping coaster at Busch Gardens; the Ninja suspended coaster at Six Flags Magic Mountain; The Dragon looping coaster at Ocean Park, Hong Kong; and Dragon Mountain at Marineland in Canada.

MACK

Heinrich Mack GmbH & Co have been manufacturing roller coasters since the beginning of the century. The company has been known for its excellent wood rides since the 1920's, and has concentrated its efforts on family roller coasters and later wooden bobsleds.

The first departure from essentially family rides was the "Wild Mouse" which was first seen in the 1950's. This ride is still a popular ride today, especially with travelling fairs.

Another innovative little ride is the Runaway Train, an electrically driven roller coaster. The advantages of this ride is the very small amount of space required to install it, considerably smaller than that needed by gravity roller coasters, making it ideal for mobile fairs and indoor locations.

Mack also has a new MIR-roller coaster opening up at Europa-Park next year. The ride's station is coming from an original MIR space station in Russia and the roller coaster will be fitted out with a Russian space theme.

ZAMPERLA

One roller coaster that Italian manufacturer, Antonio Zamperla s.p.a, are particularly proud of is the Mine Train ride at the famous Ocean Park leisure facility in Hong Kong.

Opened at the beginning of this year, the coaster was customised for Ocean Park and installed on the side of a hill overlooking Hong Kong Bay. There was much consultation between Zamperla and Ocean Park's architects and engineers to overcome the difficulties presented by the unusual site.

The area has steep, rough ground with very high slopes and Zamperla have designed a ride to cope with this as well as capitalising on the spectacular view.

The ride has three drops and a huge spiral supported by a majestic dome structure, making Mine Ride an attractive and distinctive structure. There are 14 beautiful mine train cars that give the roller coaster its theme.

Unlike the thrill rides covered in most of these roller coaster profiles, Mine Train is a family ride so appearance is very important. The speed of the gravity coaster has been chosen so the ride is exciting but also smooth and attractive to children and families.

Zamperla have been very successful with rides for the family market and the company singles out the Windstorm as one of their all time favourites because it delivers maximum thrills in a compact space.

What's New

Ragnagard

SNK Neo Geo

SNK are just about due to release their new 64 bit Neo Geo system, but when you look at this game you have to wonder how much better a 64 bit game can improve on it, Ragnagard is something right out of the box, the graphics are superb and though we'll never try and tell you that graphics make a game, when they're this good on a cassette game that only costs a few hundred bucks, you have to sit up and take notice. Players certainly will.

The really good part about Ragnagard though is that there's a Hell of a good fighting game inside those great graphics, this is an action packed "ripper" of a game that has some top class, special attack combos, hidden kill moves, multi hit combos that produce surprise results, a clever damage enhancing power gauge and just about anything a player of fighting games could ask for.

We've been unashamed fans of Neo Geo since the system first came into the market as it's almost impossible for operators not to make money with the games even if they are only average, but this one is way above average and has the sort of depth that will keep players going back to it time after time to get more of the action and find more of the countless moves that are available to them.

So needless to say, we think Ragnagard is "the goods" and the early results being posted would tend to back that up as a few operators have reported their highest take ever on a Neo Geo game. Don't miss out on at least checking this one out, it's got a lot going for it and the price represents real value.

Touch Down

Harry Levy Amusements

This very good looking American football themed game, Touch Down, is a moving belt, coin roll down game that fits all the necessary criteria needed in a successful redemption game, it's simple to play, quick to play, good to play, fun to play and players can win big at it, what more can you ask in a game?

The theme may worry some in countries where American Football isn't popular, but it shouldn't, as the theme is not a big factor in the game and everyone on the planet knows what a "touchdown" is.

Typical of Harry Levy products, this well thought out game is housed in an attractive, quality built cabinet that few players will be able to walk past without dropping coin or tokens into, and on that subject, Touch Down can be played with coin or token, and pay out in cash, token or tickets, so it should be adaptable to any location.

Touch Down has been put through an exhaustive testing program by Harry Levy Ltd and came through with flying colours, it's reasonably priced, can earn good money, has years of good service in it, especially with the "ageless" theme, and is available now for shipping anywhere in the world.

Pit Stop Crane

Smart Industries

Here's a crane that's really different. The Pit Stop Crane from Smart Industries is operated by way of a steering wheel, gear shifter and gas pedal, and is not only rewarding for players that collect the fluffy ducks, but fun to play, even for those that don't win a prize.

Smart have excelled themselves with this one with it's striking decor, magnificent sound system and genuinely innovative method of play.

The company is one of the worlds leading crane makers and are constantly looking for ways to help crane operators in the constant battle for a coin-op dollar, we saw it with the Space Crane which they introduced last year, and now this great piece that will provoke quite a few top management discussions in crane makers offices around the world.

The sort of money that the Pit Stop Crane has shown it can earn (and we're talking about it being filled with straight forward plush, nothing special) is what operators of far more glamourous machines than cranes are seen to be, expect to earn, but seldom do.

Priced in keeping with Smart's fair pricing policy, Pit Stop is a genuine star spangled money machine and anyone operating cranes or who wants to operate cranes, should look into it real quick and order quick too, to be at the top of the list, as once these babies are shown at the upcoming Trade shows like AMOA Expo, Fun Expo, and IAAPA, Smart are going to have orders stretching all the way from Dallas to Las Vegas and back to N'awlins.

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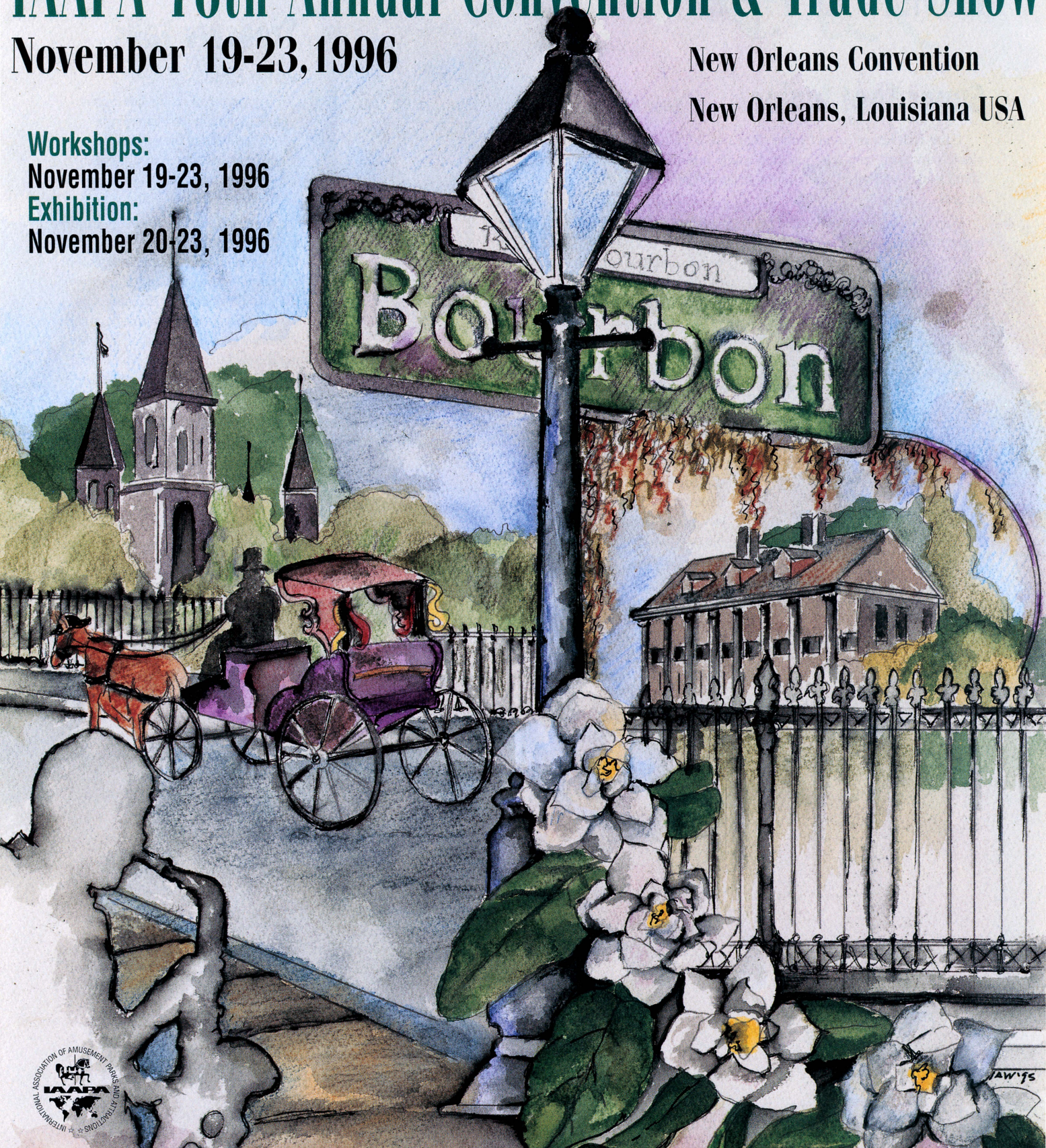

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What's New

Super Shot Junior

Skee Ball Inc

Skee-Ball has released "Super Shot Junior", a two-player redemption kiddie basketball game. It's a scaled down version of the popular "Super Shot Deluxe" and offers many of the features that made the larger game a success.

Super Shot Junior is designed to accommodate one or two players and features digital sounds, colourful graphics, and two ticket dispensers and coin mechs. It also has the quality construction, with steel frames and powder coated finish necessary for a long working life.

Another of the game's advantages is its small "footprint", make it easy to fit in even a small game room. The standard features on Super Shot Junior include optic-sensors for scoring and ball counts, Deltronic ticket dispensers, advanced diagnostics, and flexible programming capabilities.

Super Shot Junior will be shown at all the major shows

Treasure Falls

Planet Earth

Treasure Falls is the latest coin shooting game from Planet Earth which has been in the market for a while now and shown itself to be a very capable earner in arcades and FEC's throughout the USA.

A quite attractive piece, Treasure Falls is one of those games that a bit of thought has to be put into though if operating outside the US, beware as it's made for Quarter (25cents) play and is subsequently too savage on the players wallet if operated on a higher game play price without also lifting the payout. Probably best suited in locations using tokens that can be valued at around 25 cents, that way it can be left on factory settings.

Don't really know why we've bothered mentioning this game though, we should have ignored it like Planet Earth completely ignore paying legitimate advertising bills.

*The small number of **Alpine Surfers** (Namco) in the player market at time of writing are performing even better than **Alpine Racer** did when it first went into the market.*

*Four new CG games, ICE Inc's **Skimaxx**, Jaleco's **Super GT 24 Hours**, Gaelco's **Speed Up** and Tecmo's **Dead or Alive** have all completed successful test programmes showing they can earn top money.*

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IPAT Internet Terminals

Victorian Amusement Services

VAS (Victorian Amusement Services) have released a coin-op Internet Terminal that can be located anywhere that people go.

Called IPAT (Internet Public Access Terminal) the terminal is simple to use, requiring no computer skills at all, and only needs a telephone line and a bit of electricity to plug into, and the operator will have paying customers 'surfing the net' like they've been doing it all their lives. IPAT is so simple it can 'blow away' any fear of computers that anyone could have.

The machine uses a powerful Pentium based PC with a 14 inch SVGA monitor, hard drive, Quad speed, lockable CD ROM, and an electronic coin mech that will allow any pricing

It comes in a an attractive, quality built, sit down cabinet with toughened glass and secure cash box, has clear and precise instructions, and carries a 3 year warranty.

This is the future

Mini Illusion Crane

Recreativos Presas

This compact mini crane from Spain's well known manufacturer, Recreativos Presas can be counter or wall mounted and is suitable for any type of location.

It's a neat, eye catching piece that should attract a lot of passing money and comes at a price that in our eyes represents good value.

Buyers have the option of mechanical or electronic coin mech and there are two sizes of claw available.

There's also a full size Illusion Crane.

Home Run Derby

ICE Inc

We've covered Home Run Derby before but it's been in the market for a few months now and on checking, we found it's doing exceptionally well, so well that it's considered by many who are operating it, to be one of the very best FEC and larger site attractions in the market. And being of such a strong theme, and having so many levels of difficulty, there seems no real reason why that should change.Good property this one.

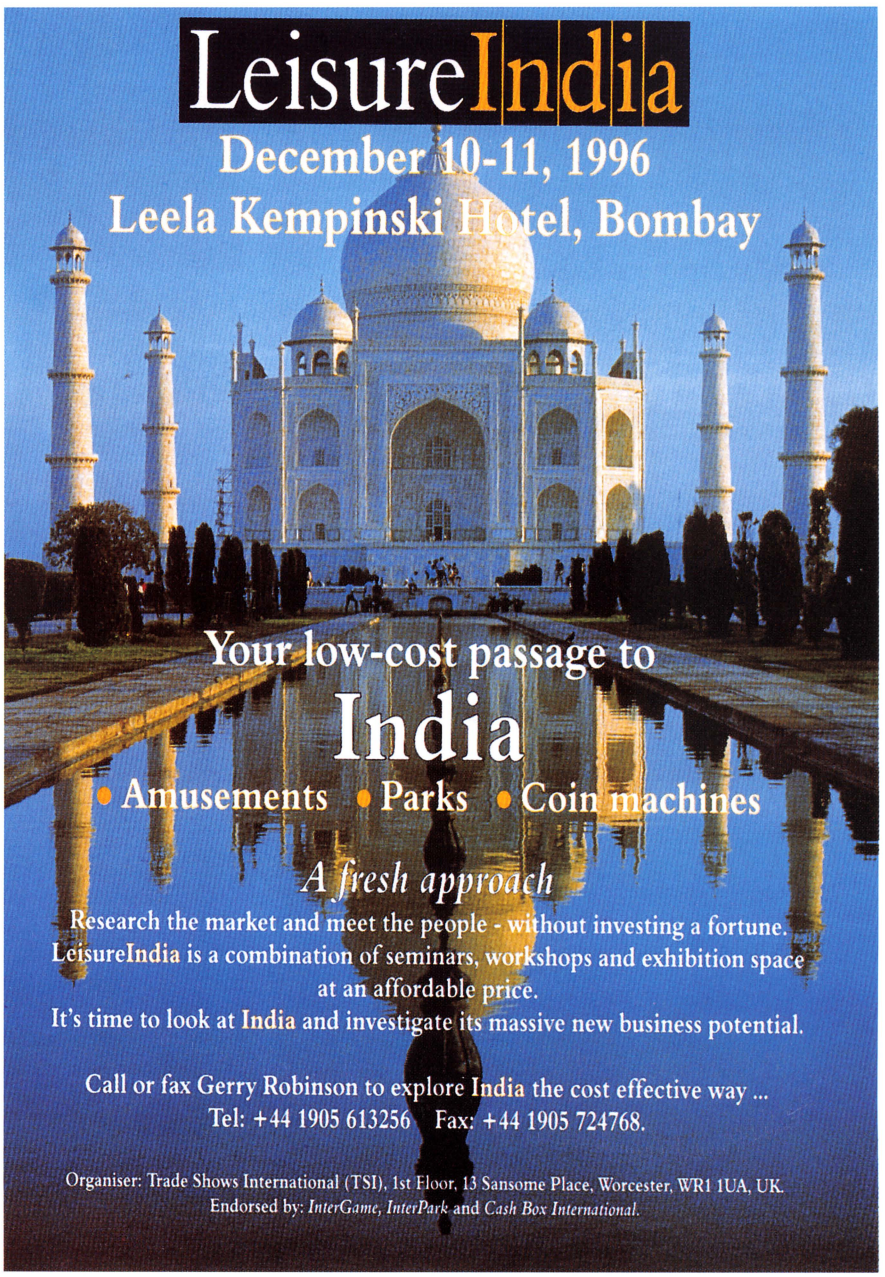
Lucky Wheel

Recreativos Presas

Lucky Wheel is a small footprint merchandiser that has the added advantage of being automatically restocked as prizes are won, keeping the playfield always full and inviting to players.

Made by Recreativos Presas in Spain, the machine has regulated prize control, a good sound system and internal halogen lighting.

The cabinet is attractive and well constructed, and as stated earlier, has a small footprint for this type of machine that's economi-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What's New

War Gods — Midway

"Choose Your God" from any of the ten weird and wonderful War Gods that Midway have created in this unique fighting game and you've got a fighting character that is quite different to anything before seen in video games.

War Gods is a genuine 3 dimensional fighting game with the characters rendered in a new process that Midway have named "Digital Skin". It comes up magnificently on screen and the game is full of furious and brutal action that players have shown they go for in a big way.

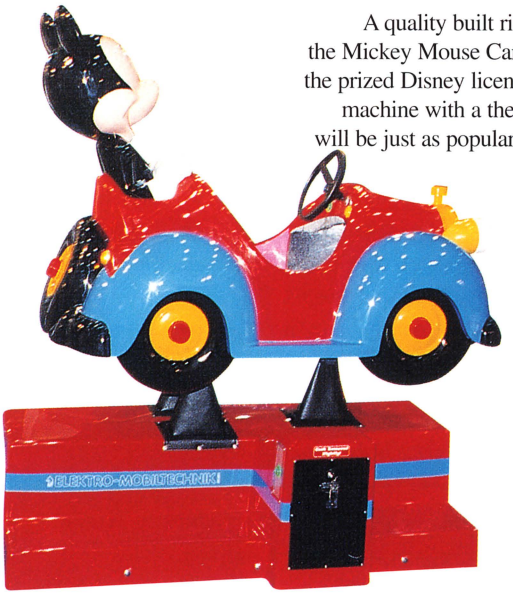
The game has some quite incredible moves, multi level moves, and combinations that are sure to appeal to fighting game players in a big way, and there's hidden characters, gruesome fatalities, fantastic powers for each of the Gods and lots more in this great looking package of fighting fury.

Shown at this years ACME Show in Orlando, War Gods is now shipping and if early reports are any guide, there's a lot of players out there that are going to be *"choosing their God"* and fighting other Gods to the death, around the arcades of the world over coming months.

Mickey Mouse Ride — EMT

EMT, Germany's big Kiddie Ride manufacturer have put together a great Disney themed rid with this Mickey Mouse car and look to be on a sure fire winner with KR operators all over the world

The striking red car with the worlds best known character sitting up there in the Dickey seat is a ride that kids are not going to walk past without putting up a Hell of a fight to get the necessary coinage out of their minders wallets or purse to give it a spin



A quality built ride, as all EMT rides are, the Mickey Mouse Car expands EMT's use of the prized Disney license and offers operators a machine with a theme that they can be sure will be just as popular in ten years time as it is right now, that's almost gold plated.

EMT are known to be working on more new Disney themed rides and they are also having quite remarkable success with their range of Disney Playground Furniture

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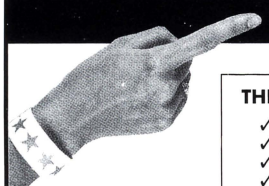

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Safe Cracker — Bally

Safe Cracker, Bally's new Pinball type token game is now moving into the market and it will be interesting to see how players react to this innovative product which has been created by the team that designed Addams Family, and which on face value should be ideal for pubs and bars, but could conceivably work in just about any type of location.

The aim of the player in Safe Cracker is to "crack the safe" within a set time, by basically hitting one of three series of playfield shots which activate an electronic board game in the backbox and then to complete the board game to open the "safe".

If players succeed in this they get a special Safe Cracker token that the game rolls down the top of the playfield glass, and which depending on the operator and/or the location, can be used for redemption of some kind, as a keepsake, or as a coin to get another game.

Though the playfield is shorter than a normal Pinball, play is quite good and all together this is a very intriguing game that deserves to do well.

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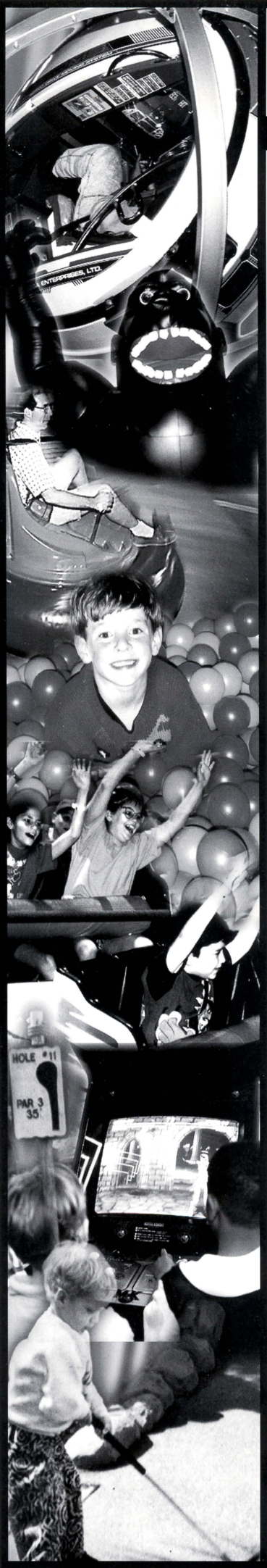

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CBI-1

What's New

Time Crisis Kits

Namco

Most operators would know that Time Crisis is a game that is sitting on top of most charts around the world and looks like having a long and productive life, but some may have missed the fact that the game is available in kit form.

This gives operators with a spare cabinet lying around a rare opportunity to share in the benefits of a top game at a far cheaper entry price than if they had to buy the dedicated game.

Hollywood Photo Booth

Smart Industries

The Hollywood Photo Booth from Smart Industries uses a laser print system that makes it quick, efficient and very economical to run. The pictures are captured by a video camera that projects the picture on to a 13" monitor in front of the subjects which are then printed out on a laser printer.

Customers (the Hollywood Photo Booth can accommodate two at a time) have six backgrounds they can choose from for their four pictures, including the always popular, "Wanted, Dead or Alive" poster format.

The compilations of picture and background are carried out quickly through the PC processor unit and the pictures that the machine produces on an 11" x 8" sheet and delivers to the patrons are good clear shots that are obviously proving very popular.

Depending on the location, the Hollywood Photo Booth can operate on a vend price anywhere between $1 and $5 and with the product cost rock solid at only nine cents a vend, that means profit for the operator.

With the basic simplicity of this unit and the trouble free electronic components it uses, there seems no reason why this unit won't have years of trouble free life and make a lot of money.

Smart have put the machine through a searching, site testing programme over the past few months and the results have been well above what was expected when the booth was put into development.

*The soon to be released **King of Fighters '96** from SNK has shown in test locations in Japan that it could easily equal the performance of **K of F '95***

*Data East and Capcom are the big tips to produce 'hot' conversion games at next months AM Show in Tokyo, great reports on DE's **B-Ball 3D** Basketball game, and everyone at Capcom seem extremely happy about something.*

***Prop Cycle** is doing good enough to make a goose out of a certain editor.*

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Pit Stop Crane

Smart Industries

Acá presentamos una crane "grúa" que realmente es diferente. La Pit Stop Crane de Smart Industries se opera a través de un volante, de una palanca de cambios y de un pedal a nafta; y no solo es gratificante para aquellos jugadores que recogen los patitos mullidos sino también es divertido para aquellos que no ganan un premio.

Smart se ha superado a sí misma con éste producto, que posee una decoraciõn llamativa, un sistema de sonido magnífico y un método de juego genuinamente innovativo.

Esta compañía es uno de los fabricantes líderes de cranes y constantemente está buscando la forma de ayudar a los operadores de cranes en la contínua lucha por conseguir un dolar en una operaciõn con fichas, y ésto lo vivimos con la Space Crane que ellos presentaron el año pasado, y ahora ésta gran pieza va a provocar mas de una discusiõn en las mesas de las oficinas de los máximos directivos de los fabricantes de cranes alrededor del mundo.

La cantidad de dinero que Pit Stop Crane ha mostrado que puede ganar (y nosotros nos referimos a las cranes solo rellenas con muñequitos de plush, nada en especial) es lo que los operadores con máquinas mucho mas sofisticadas que cranes esperan ver, esperan ganar, pero muy raramente lo logran.

Pit Stop, que tiene un precio promedio dentro de la política justa de precios de Smart, es una máquina de hacer dinero, una genuína estrella que brilla y cualquiera que opere cranes o que quiera operar cranes, debería examinar rapidamente y, tambien, rapidamente ordenarla, para estar al frente de la lista, ya que una vez que estos bebés sean expuestos en las prõximas exposiciones como AMOA Expo, Fun Expo y IAAPA, Smart recibirá õrdenes que llegan desde Dallas a Las Vegas y hasta el mismísimo N'awlins.

Ragnagard

SNK Neo Geo

SNK ya está pronto a lanzar su nuevo sistema Neo Geo de 64 bits, pero cuando uno observa este juego debe preguntarse cuánto más puede mejorarse un juego de 64 bits en él. Ragnagard es algo fuera de serie, los gráficos son geniales y a pesar de que nunca intentaremos y les diremos a Uds. que los gráficos hacen un juego; cuando estos son tan buenos como éstos en un cassette de juego que solo cuesta unos cientos de dõlares, uno debe sentarse y prestar atenciõn. Los jugadores, sin duda alguna, lo harán. La parte realmente buena sobre Ragnagard es que tiene un Infierno de buen juego de lucha dentro de estos grandiosos gráicos. Esta es una acción empaquetada "desgarradora" de un juego que posee algunas combinaciones especiales de ataque, movimientos escondidos letales, combinaciones de golpes múltiples que producen resultados sorprendentes, una llave de poder que intensifica el daño inteligente que posee, todo de õptima calidad, y, todo lo que a un jugador de juegos de lucha puede ocurrírsele pedir.

Hemos sido fanáticos no avergonzados de Neo Geo desde que el sistema apareciõ en el mercado, ya que es casi imposible que los operadores no logren beneficios econõmicos con estos juegos, incluso si los mismos son sõlo término medio, pero éste es un juego muy superior al promedio y tiene el tipo de profundidad que mantendrá a los jugadores regresando al mismo una y otra vez, para conseguir más acciõn y encontrar más cantidad de los movimientos interminables que están a disposiciõn de los jugadores.

Por todo esto es innecesario decir, que pensamos que Ragnagard es "el bueno" y que los buenos resultados prematuros apoyan esta conjetura ya que algunos operadores ya han informado que han logrado con este juego las mejores ganancias desde que poseen juegos Neo Geo. No se pierda, por lo menos, la oportunidad de observar este juego, tiene mucho para que funcione bien y el costo representa un valor real.

Touch Down

Harry Levy Amusements

Este excelente juego temático sobre el Football Americano, Touch Down (tanto marcado al tocar el suelo con el balõn detrás de la meta del adversario) es un juego roll-down con un cinturõn movible operado con fichas, apropiado y que cubre todas las normas necesarias en un juego exitoso de recupero (Redemption), es simple para jugar, rápido para jugar, bueno para jugar y divertido para jugar y, los jugadores pueden ganar bien con él, qué más se puede pedir de un juego?

La temática puede preocupar a algunos en paises donde el Football Americano no es popular, pero no deberían preocuparse, ya que la temática no es el factor importante en el juego y cualquier persona sobre nuestro planeta sabe lo que significa un "touch down".

Típico de los productos Harry Levy, éste también está ubicado en una cabina de buena calidad y atractiva por la cual muy pocos jugadores podrán pasar al lado sin dejar caer alguna moneda o fichas y, con respecto a este tema, Touch Down puede ser jugado tanto con monedas o con fichas y paga en efectivo, fichas o tickets, y por lo tanto se adapta a cualquier tipo de Salõn.

Touch Down ha sido puesto bajo un programa de pruebas exhaustivo por Harry Levy Ltd. y aprobõcon excelente, tiene un precio razonable, puede ganar buen dinero, significa años de buen servicio, especialmente con la temática "siempre joven", y yá está disponible para ser entregado en cualquier parte del mundo.

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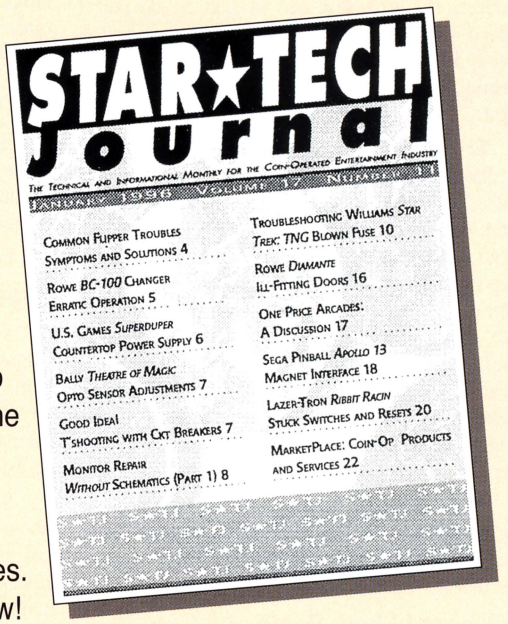
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Common Flipper Troubles Symptoms and Solutions 4
Rowe BC-100 Changer Erratic Operation 5
U.S. Games Superduper Countertop Power Supply 6
Bally Theatre of Magic Opto Sensor Adjustments 7
Good Idea! T'shooting with Ckt Breakers 7
Monitor Repair Without Schematics (Part 1) 8
Troubleshooting Williams Star Trek: TNG Blown Fuse 10
Rowe Diamante Ill-Fitting Doors 16
One Price Arcades: A Discussion 17
Sega Pinball Apollo 13 Magnet Interface 18
Lazer-Tron Rabbit Racin Stuck Switches and Resets 20
MarketPlace: Coin-Op Products and Services 22

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War Gods Midway

"Elija su Dios" entre cualquiera de los Dioses de Guerra sobrenaturales y maravillosos que Midway ha creado en este original juego de lucha y Ud. tiene un personaje luchador que es bastante diferente a cualquier otra cosa vista hasta la actualidad en video juegos.

War Gods (Los Dioses de la Guerra) es un juego de lucha genuino en 3ra. dimensiõn con los personajes presentados a través de un proceso nuevo que Midway ha llamado "Digital Skin" (piel digital). Posee una magnífica presentaciõn en pantalla y el juego está lleno de acciones brutales y furiosas que los jugadores han demostrado que les gustan mucho.

El juego tiene algunos movimientos increíbles, movimientos de niveles múltiples, hay personajes escondidos, fatalidades horribles, poderes fantásticos que poseen cada unode los Dioses y mucho mas en este paquete de lucha furiosa de gran atractivo.

Exhibido en el Show ACME de este año en Orlando, War Gods ya se está vendiendo y, si las primeras evaluaciones son correctas, hay muchos jugadores que estarán "eligiendo a sus Dioses" y peleando con otros Dioses a muerte, en todos los Salones del mundo en los prõximos meses.

Safe Cracker Bally

Safe Cracker, el nuevo flipper de Pinball operado con fichas está ingresando ahora al mercado y será interesante ver como los jugadores reaccionarán a este producto tan innovador, que ha sido creado por el equipo que diseño la Familia Addams, y que por su precio debería ser ideal para pubs y bares, y podría incluso, llegar a funcionar bien en cualquier tipo de lugar.

El propõsito del jugador de Safe Cracker es "hacer estallar el seguro" (crack the safe) dentro de un tiempo límite, basicamente logrando golpear una de las tres series de disparos en el campo de juego que activa un juego de pantalla electrõnico en la parte posterior del juego y luego completar el juego en la pantalla para abrir el "seguro" (safe). Si los jugadores logran hacer ésto, ellos reciben una ficha especial de Safe Cracker, que cae desde la parte superior del vidrio del campo de juego y que, dependiendo del operador y/o tipo de salõn, puede ser usado como recupero de algún tipo, como un recuerdo, o como moneda para conseguir otro juego.

A pesar de que el campo de juego es más pequeño que lo normal en los flippers, el juego es bastante bueno y en general es un juego con bastante intriga y merece que funcione bien.

Hollywood Photo Booth Smart Industries

La cabina fotográfica Hollywood de Smart Industries utiliza un sistema de impresiõn laser que hace que la misma funcione rápido, eficientemente y que sea muy econõmica. Las fotos son capturadas por una video cámara que proyecta la foto a un monitor de 13 pulgadas en frente de los sujetos, que luego son impresos en una impresora laser.

Los clientes (la Cabina de fotos Hollywood puede acomodar dos personas al mismo tiempo) posee seis fondos que éstos pueden elegir para sus cuatro copias, incluyendo el tan popular poster "se busca vivo o muerto" (Wanted, Dead or Alive).

La recopilaciõn de la foto y el fondo son llevadas a cabo rapidamente a través de una unidad de procesamiento de PC (computadora) y las fotos que la máquina produce y entrega en una hoja de 11 x 8 pulgadas a los clientes son muy buenas y claras y están, obviamente demostrando que son muy populares.

Dependiendo en la ubicaciõn, la Cabina de Fotos Hollywood puede operar a un precio de máquina expendedora, de entre $ 1.- y $ 5.- y ya que el costo fijo del producto es sõlo de 9 centavos por despacho, esto significa buena ganancia para el operador.

Con la simplicidad básica de esta unidad y los componentes electrñicos libres de problemas que utiliza, parecería que no existe razõn alguna del porquéesta unidad no tendría años de vida libre de problemas y redituables para sus operadores.

Smart ha puesto la máquina en un programa de busqueda y de prueba en los últimos meses y los resultados fueron mejores que los esperados cuando la cabina fue desarrollada.

Mickey Mouse Car Ride EMT.

EMT, el fabricante de Kiddie Rides (Rides para los más pequeños) mas importante de Alemania, ha logrado unir un gran Ride temático de Disney con su coche del Ratõn Mickey (Mickey Mouse) y parece ser seguro uno de esos Rides ganadores para los operadores de Kiddie Rides en todo el mundo.

El llamativo coche rojo con el personaje más conocido de todo el mundo sentado en el asiento Dickey es un Ride que los chicos no van a dejar pasar sin pelear lo suficiente como para lograr las suficientes monedas de las billeteras o de las carteras de sus guardianes para poder dar una vuelta.

Un Ride bien construido, como todos los Rides de EMT, el coche de Mickey Mouse amplia el uso de la licencia premiada de Disney que posee EMT y le ofrece a los operadores una máquina con un tema que ellos pueden estar seguros que será tan popular en 10 años como lo es en la actualidad, y ésto es casi una placa de oro.

EMT son conocidos por estar desarrollando más Rides sobre temas de Disney y han tenido hasta ahora bastante éxito con su línea de Muebles para Patios de Juegos de Disney.

Este seguro de darle un vistazo a esto.

Super Shot Junior Skee Ball Inc

Skee-Ball ha lanzado "Super Shot Junior", un juego de basketball para kiddies (chiquitos) de recupero. Es una versiõn en pequeña escala del tan popular "Super Shot Deluxe" y ofrece muchas de las características que han logrado que el juego grande sea un éxito.

Super Shot Junior está diseñado para acomodar uno o dos jugadores y posee sonidos digitales, gráficos muy coloridos y 2 despachadores de tickets y mecanismos para monedas/fichas. Posee la misma calidad de construcción, los marcos de acero y la capa de terminaciõn de polvo necesaria para que tenga una vida prolongada de funcionamiento.

Otra de las ventajas del juego es su pequeña "huella" (footprint), lo que permite acomodarla incluso en una habitaciõn muy pequeña de juegos. Las características normales, standard de Super Shot Junior incluyen sensores õpticos para el puntaje y la cuenta de las pelotas, despachadores de tickets Deltronic, diagnõsticos de avanzada, y capacidad de programaciõn flexible.

Super Shot Junior será exhibido en todos los principales Shows en los prõximos meses.

Treasure Falls Planet Earth

Treasure Falls is el último y mas nuevo juego de tiro al blanco operado con fichas de Planet Earth que ya ha estado en el mercado por un tiempo y que demuestra que es muy capaz de ganar bien tanto en Salones como en FEC's en todo Estados Unidos.

Una pieza bastante atractiva, Treasure Falls es uno de esos juegos que para operarlo fuera de Estados Unidos debe ser adaptada, ya que está armada para jugar por un Cuarto (25 centavos) por jugada y puede llegar a ser, por consiguiente, demasiado salvaje sobre las billeteras de los jugadores si es operada en un precio mayor por jugada sin tambien aumentar su recompensa.

Posiblemente mas cõmoda para usar en lugares que utilizan fichas que pueden ser cotizadas a precios aproximados a los 25 centavos, y de esta manera puede ser dejada en salones de fábricas.

Realmente no sé porqué nos hemos molestado en mencionar este juego ya que, deberíamos haberlo ignorado porque Planet Earth completamente se niega a pagar las facturas legítimas pendientes sobre su propaganda.

Time Crisis Kits Namco

La mayoría de los operadores conocen que Time Crisis es un juego que está ubicado primero en la mayoría de los gráficos de todo el mundo y parece que va a tener una vida prolongada y fructífera, pero algunos quizás pasaron por alto que también está disponible en formato Kit. Esto les permite a los operadores que poseen una cabina fuera de uso dando vueltas por allí, aprovechar una oportunidad única y rara de compartir los beneficios de un juego líder a un precio mucho mas econõmico que si tuviesen que comprar el juego en formato dedicado.

SEGA KICK GOAL WITH SUPER HOT PINBALL LICENSES

Los flippers de Sega han seguido la doctina de temas licenciados para sus flippers con mucha religiosidad y han existido tiempos en los que no han tenido toda la suerte con una película con la que han realizado un juego cuando ésta se ha desplomado en los cines, pero con respecto a éesto, sin duda alguna han "logrado un gol" con sus dos últimos juegos, Twister y el que proximamente será lanzado Independence Day.

Twister es uno de los realmente grandes éxitos de taquillas en los veranos norteños y parece que será el gran éxito del año cuando sume un excedente de $100 millones en su primeros 9 días de exhibiciõn, pero unas pocas semanas después, viene Independence Day y ya ha batido todos los records conocidos con $126 millones en sus primeros 7 días.

Ahora todos sabemos que la licencia no hace al juego, pero chico, cuando las licencias son tan calientes como las de Twister e Independence Day, sin duda ayudan a escuchar el tintineo de las monedas que caen a las viejas cajas registradoras.

We Heard.....

Los pocos Alpine Surfers - Surfistas Alpinos (Namco) que existen en el mercado al momento de escribir estas líneas están funcionando incluso mejor, que lo que logr#o el Alpine Racer - Corredor Alpino - cuando recién fue lanzado al mercado • *Cuatro nuevos juegos CG, Skimaxx de ICE Inc., Super GT 24 Hours de Jaleco, Speed Up de Gaelco y Dead or Alive de Tecmo, han todos completado programas de pruebas con éxito, mostrando que pueden ganar buen dinero* • Prop Cycle de Namco puede hacer parecer a cierto escritor "verse como un ganso" en la forma que ha empezado • *El pronto ha ser lanzado King of Fighters Œ96 de SNK ha demostrado en lugares de Japõn que estuvo a prueba, que podrá facilmente igualar la actuaciõn de K of F '95* • Data East y Capcom son las puntas grandes para producir juegos de conversiõn "calientes" a ser lanzados en los prõximos meses en el AM Show en Tokio, grandes informes sobre el juego B-Ball 3D Basketball de DE, y todos y cada uno de las personas de Capcom parecen muy felices por algo.

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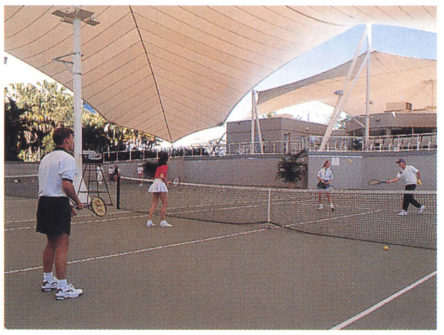

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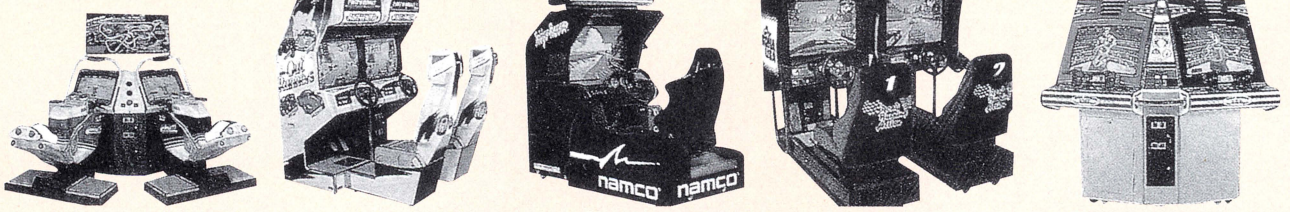

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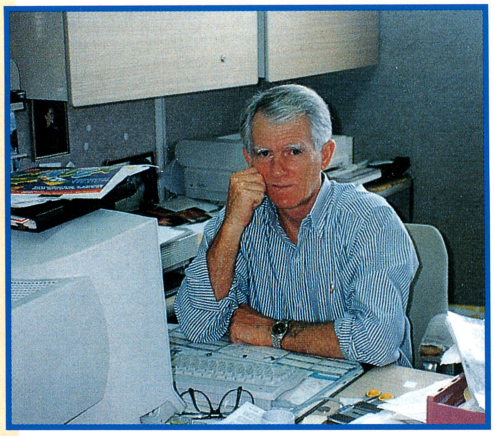


There's a foul crime being perpetrated on the inhabitants of this planet that we haven't been told about..... someone.....or some *thing*..... is making time go quicker than it ever has before.

I'd been thinking about the increased use by hi tech boffins of the term "real time", for quite a while, but the way time is in overdrive was really brought home to me when my wife rang me on a Saturday and asked me to pick the ironing up on the way home.

"Come on girl" I said *"I picked it up day before yesterday"*

"You've really lost the plot mate, that was last Saturday when you picked up last weeks ironing" said she, and though I know you should never do it, I argued.....and lost.

That got me really thinking and I worked it out that it had to be aliens or this bloody hi tech mob that are always fiddling with something they shouldn't be.....time is definitely going quicker.....so I got my best watch, a beautiful $10, bought in Bali, counterfeit Rolex, set the time and date spot on, and had it hermetically sealed in a silicone prism so that it couldn't be affected by outside influences .....*then I found out what this "real time" that the gurus are always talking about really is.*

I used to write this page once a month, but in "real time", I'm writing it every two weeks

Now I haven't got a clue how they have done it, but *they*, whoever they are, have got us by the short and curlies, *they* are cutting our time on this planet in half.

And when you wake up to that, it's easy to see why we're all doing it tough, you think you're doing your collections every two weeks, but in "real time" you're only getting one weeks takings, no wonder cash boxes are light.

And if you think that's crook, spare a thought for old Jack and the crew here at Cash Box, we're pumping out 24 magazines a year , and only getting paid for twelve. And it also answers a lot of questions about the dreaded "plot".....you know, that "plot" that everyone's losing, well how the Hell can any plot which is based on a 24 hour day not get lost, when the days are really only 12 hours long?

And what about the Trade Shows? It's no wonder a lot of them are down in attendances, the poor old operator went to last years Show a couple of months ago.

By the calendar we've got JAMMA, AMOA Expo, Fun Expo, LIW, Waterparks, AMOAQ and IAAPA in a 9 week period starting next month, but in "real time" it's only a bit over 4 weeks.

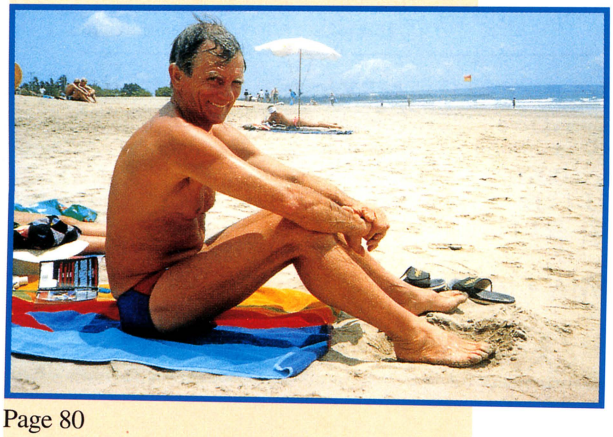
The more you think about this, the more it sucks, but it does explain a lot of things, like feeling 30 and looking 60, like turning the TV on to watch a big game and finding it's already half time, maybe it's even got something to do with how you can fly to the USA from Australia and get there 5 or six hours before you left, I don't know, all I do know is that we are getting ripped off in big chunks.

And the more I think about it the less likely it is that the boffins of this world are responsible, my first pick was Microsoft, but they wouldn't do it because it would only give them half the time to earn their next billion, IBM were seen as another chance, but they need to slow time down not speed it up. I also crossed off Sega and Namco because they're operators and feeling it in the cash box like other operators, so it has to be bloody aliens.

I think we must have upset them a bit with all those space games where we kept shooting the crap out of them for hours and hours, and with that rotten TV show, Star Trek, I don't know about you, but I never really trusted that pointy eared bloke, Mr Spock.

So there you go, looks like we have to live with it, personally I'm off to beautiful Bali for a few days with the bride and the little guy to get a bit of sun and fun.

Stuff the aliens, I know I'm really only 30.....*or so.*



ADVERTISERS INDEX

Ago's Distributing	5
Amutec	40
AMOA Expo '96	63
AMOAQ Int'l Convention '96	75
Associated Leisure	51
Belsos Pty Ltd	56
Bondeal Sales Int'l	62
Carousel International	35
Cinco 5	28
Coastal Fibreglass	47
Deith Distributing	9
Escape Electronics	61
Elaut NV	24
EMT Kiddie Rides	39
Falgas Kiddie Rides	41
Fun Expo '96	71
G System, Taiwan	20
Gamemasters P/L	31
Galaxy Electronics	27
Gottlieb Electronics	32 & 33
Goldfinder	22
Harry Levy Cont.	14 & 15
IAAPA '96	67
ICE Inc.	6, 7 & 25
Impact Company	68
James Industries	79
Jolly Roger Amusements	43
Kiddie Rides Australia	42
K & U Co	21
Lazer-Tron Inc	18 & 19
Leisure India	69
Merit Industries	11
M & P Amusements	77
Metrotainment Network	29
Mondial International	55
Muzicom Australia	21
National Ticket Co	70
Overseas Amusements	57
Pentranic Inc	IBC
Premier Technology	IFC
Perfect Video Games	23
Playtec	45
Prime Play	37
Rock-Ola Manufacturing	BC
Sesame Amusements	46
Skee Ball Inc	68
Standard Int'l	24
Star Tech Journal	73
Top Gun Amusements	59
Toyo (Japan)	30
Viper Electronics	17
Whittaker Amusements	40
Wurlitzer Australia	57
Zone Laser Game Systems	59

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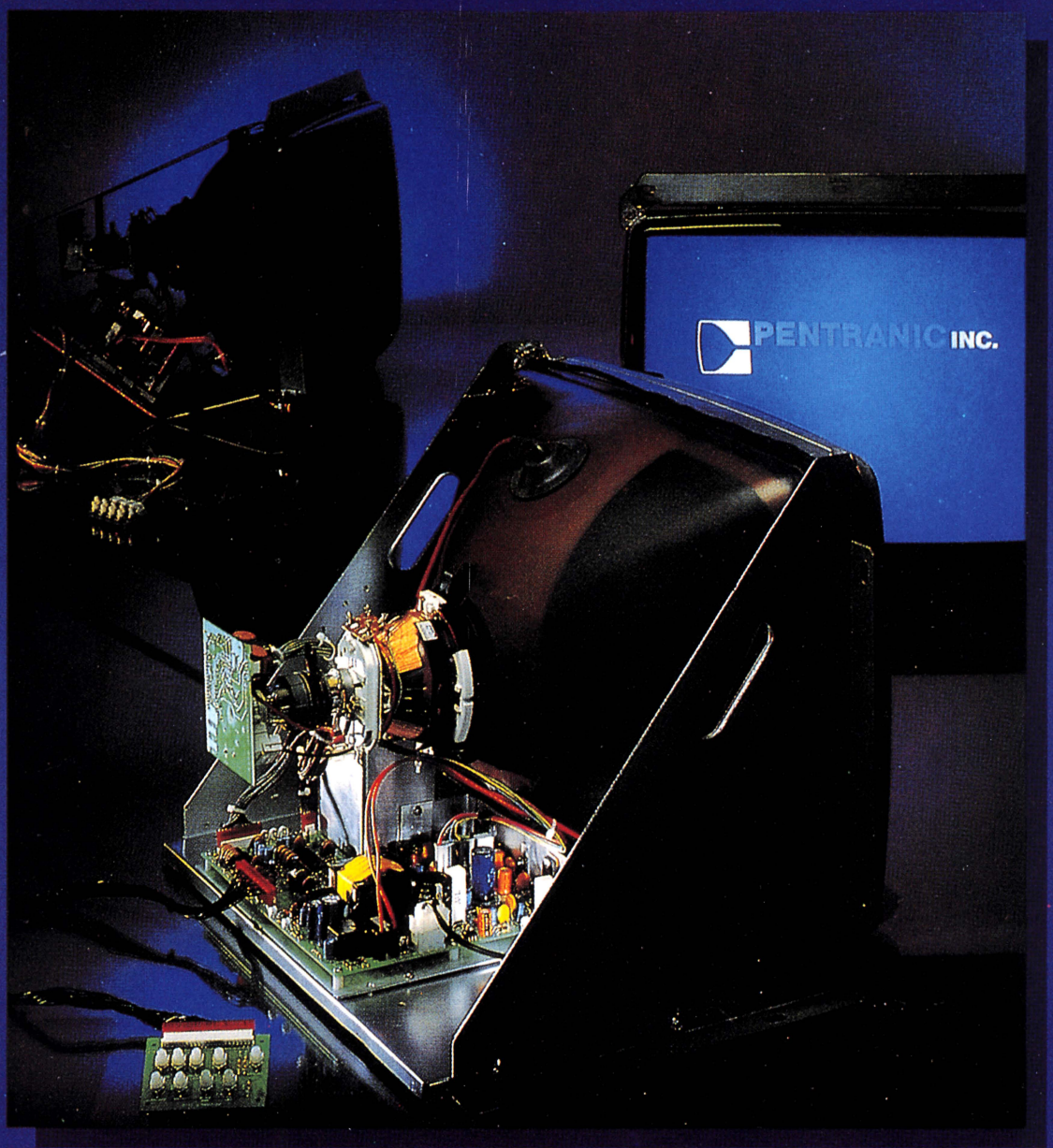

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